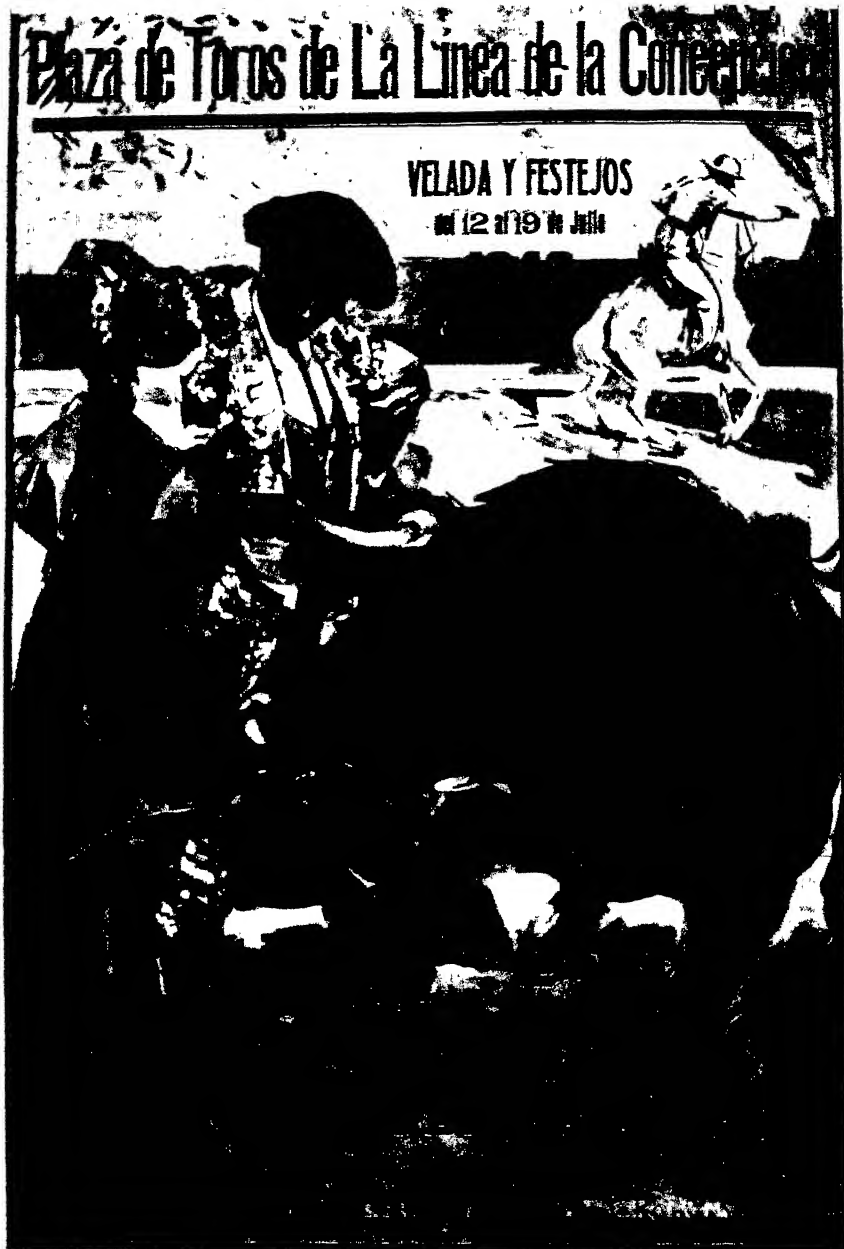


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*Poster for the great Bull Fight*

*'Outside the Hotel Iberia, the famous matador, Martial Lalanda, stepped out of an antiquated taxi cab'*

# A JOURNEY TO GIBRALTAR

BY  
ROBERT HENREY

*With 21 photographs*

**CHECKED - 1963**



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THIS BOOK IS PRODUCED IN COM-  
PLETE CONFORMITY WITH THE  
AUTHORIZED ECONOMY STANDARDS



*My dear Captain Woodford,*

*There is no pleasanter place to take tea on a hot afternoon than the Garrison Library in Gibraltar, where well-filled bookshelves slumber in the shade of exotic foliage.*

*Will you, my dear Woodford, do me a favour? Will you take this book, which I dedicate to the officers and men of the Fortress, and place it in the hands of the Secretary of the Gibraltar Library? It will have to be classified as light reading. That which is noble, alas, and much that is grim has, by necessity, been omitted in deference to that unseen but all-powerful creature, the censor.*

*R. H.*

December 1942.

2 Carrington House,  
Hertford Street,  
W.I.

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IT was a Sunday in mid-May, just two years after the German attack on the Low Countries. The weather in London was beginning to be warm, and the parks were filled with lilac. There had been no raid on the capital since the great nocturnal onslaught of 10th May 1941, and London seemed fuller than at any time since war was declared.

I had not left England since the fall of Paris, when I had arrived home after an adventurous journey from France, where all the roads were clogged with refugees, while the entire nation, panic-stricken, was waiting for the German armistice terms. What had happened to France during these two years? However much one consulted the newspapers it was impossible to form any coherent idea of the situation on the Continent. Yet this was perhaps the question that English people most frequently asked themselves. On the other side of the Channel there lay a country shrouded in mystery, and the narrow stretch of sea between Dover and Calais was an impenetrable barrier. The desire to set foot on the Continent once more became an obsession with me. I longed to peep behind the curtain and see what had happened since my departure, to find out what people were thinking and doing, and when I was given an opportunity to visit Portugal and Spain I felt that I would at last find out some of the things I most wanted to know. These two neutral countries were the nearest to France I could hope to get to until the war was over.

I packed two small bags for the journey by air to Lisbon, and carried with me a small case with sufficient things for the night. I drove to Paddington station just before five o'clock, where I found crowds of men and women in khaki, and just as many in Air Force blue. The public was not allowed on the platform to bid farewell to their friends. I had not seen anything quite like this since Victoria station during the Great War. I did not know where all these people were

going, but it was an impressive manifestation of the country's spreading war strength, and I felt somewhat intimidated. I sat rather dejectedly in the corner of my carriage, not inclined to talk with anybody, and staring vacantly out of the window as soon as the train pulled out of the station. I watched Windsor Castle slip away out of sight, and I looked at the punts and the river boats gliding down the Thames, and it was lovely to see the may-trees drooping into the limpid water, for these are the scenes that English people recall when they are far away and home-sick. I looked at the cows in the meadows and the factories that seemed to be springing up from nowhere, and my eyes feasted on the greenness that is the English countryside. After several hours we passed through Bath, that had been so cruelly wounded, and we saw little houses, soaked in Georgian dandyism, uprooted.

It was raining when we arrived at our destination, and the station courtyard could not have been more depressing. It was everything that one associates with a small country town at dusk on Sunday. Nevertheless I suddenly became aware of a young man in the familiar uniform of Imperial Airways. He was gathering his flock together, and he was so charming that I forgot about the rain and the look of desolation in the streets. A motor coach was waiting to take us to an hotel, and when we arrived there the manager was on the threshold to greet us, and he told us how anxious he was to take our order for dinner, so that we should not be kept waiting after our long journey.

The next morning I breakfasted on strong tea and raw tomatoes, and joined the other passengers in the motor coach that was to take us to the aerodrome. It was just an ordinary, typical country town. There were a few houses that had been bombed, and there were young men and women waiting at the corners for motor buses to take them to work. There was the main road, with its excellent smooth surface, though I know not where it went or whence it came, but in about a quarter of an hour we turned out of it into a lane, and in front of us we saw what I imagined to be Spitfires or Hurricanes lined up rather mysteriously beside some camouflaged huts.

A soldier on guard opened an iron gate at our approach, and we swung into a yard where some mechanics hurried across. There was a pretty young girl in mechanic's uniform, and I realized for the first time that women like her do not exist only on posters.

The cabin of our aeroplane was upholstered in a delicate pearl-grey with high-backed arm-chairs having balloon-like head-rest cushions. It was quite the most comfortable thing in aeroplanes, with its graceful lines and colouring. As soon as we had taken off a Dutch steward brought newspapers and magazines. I glanced at the headlines of a paper, but with a more detached air than usual. My narrow window had a wooden shutter over it to prevent us from looking down upon the English defences. Somebody had said that we would fly very low for recognition during the best part of an hour, and that we would then land to replenish our petrol supply before climbing into the sky and turning south towards the sunshine. The machine bumped its way amongst the air currents. It was very early in the morning to be faced with such an unpleasant ordeal. I took up my small case, and broke open the seals of the envelope containing my censored papers. There was a copy of *Vogue*, that had arrived just before my departure, a novel, and a few odds and ends. I turned the pages of *Vogue*, but I was beginning to feel very sick with the continual see-sawing. In front of me a big hefty man, who I had thought upon departure ought to be a match for anything, was discreetly burying his features in one of those brown paper bags so thoughtfully supplied by air companies. I tried closing my eyes and placing my head against the balloon cushion, and when this did not seem entirely satisfactory, I opened my eyes again and examined the steward, who was busying himself at the end of the cabin. He was slim and very fair, with youthful, though rather untidy, moustaches, but he had the most expressive blue eyes. He must have been intrigued at my interest in his person, for he came up thinking I was cold, and placed a rug over my lap. Two men behind me had started the journey by talking with great animation about their affairs. They occupied double

seats, whereas mine was alone. I had heard occasional snatches of their conversation concerning a recent journey to Russia, and it had sounded rather exciting, but their enthusiasm had gradually waned until now they both sat back looking glum and a little ashen in features. I began to wonder what would happen and how I would like it if this lasted for seven or eight hours, but just as I was getting thoroughly depressed we landed at an unspecified aerodrome.

It was not raining, but the field was sodden, and great drops of water fell from the little wooden huts, and from the trees. Most sinister aeroplanes loomed in the near distance, which probably explains how very quickly we were hurried into a waiting-room that faced the other way. Several of our passengers were angry because they would have liked to walk up and down on the wet grass trying to revive their spirits, but the Dutch officials were adamant, and the best we could do was to open the window and look out on the countryside. The country was hilly and beautiful. There was a church and a peaceful country house, and in the valley sheep were grazing. In less than half an hour we were back in the machine. It was still cold and the windows were shuttered, but our flight was smooth, or at any rate appeared so in comparison with the first hour. The conversation of the two men behind me was resumed cautiously, and my magazine seemed considerably more readable. Some time later the steward came along to remove the shutters, and looking out I discovered that we were over cotton-wool clouds.

For a moment I thought that under these clouds there must still be land, for when there were breaks in them I saw little flashes of white that I took to be cottages. Soon I found that these were sea-horses breaking over a rather troubled ocean, and even as I watched the clouds rolled away and left us in a clear sky. The weather was changing. We were in the transition period between cloud and sun. Straight below us I could see the reflection of our aeroplane in the water. It looked tiny—no bigger than my hand—and round it was a most beautiful rainbow.

At the top end of the cabin was the door leading to where the pilot and the wireless operator sat. On occasion the wireless operator would pass through to talk with our steward. He was a heavily built giant, with the neck of a bull, and all his hair was shaven. It was becoming warmer, and I soon discarded both my rug and my coat. The waves disappeared, and the sea became as glass, while our machine glided through the sky with nothing but the low throb of the engines. I imagined that we were now over the Atlantic, and were probably just off the coast of Brittany. I would not even have the thrill of seeing the coast line of France. If our engines went wrong would we, I wondered, come down in France, and be taken away as prisoners to Germany, or would we prefer to sink patriotically, far from anybody, in this azure sea? The steward was taking a bowl of hot soup to the pilot. It looked excellent, and it made me feel hungry. There was an altimeter and a clock near the door. The altimeter was Greek to me, but the clock marked midday. We did not seem to be travelling very high, and there was certainly no cloud cover if we were chased by some angry Junker, but both the sea and the heavens were clear of human life. There was not the smallest vessel to be seen.

Our aeroplane continued its way with quiet assurance, and one began to feel incredibly safe. The engines never deviated from their monotonous note, and there was not the slightest shimmer. Suddenly I felt my arm burning where the sun's concentrated rays were falling upon it. We must certainly have passed Brittany. Perhaps we were off the golden sand dunes and wild carnations of the Vendée where Clemenceau spent his waning years. How happy he was not to live so long, or would the Tiger have made a supreme effort to save his country?

The steward was offering me a cup of soup, which I accepted with alacrity. It was steaming hot, and I felt better for it. A few minutes later he came round with luncheon prepared by the company before our departure. On the cover of the cardboard container was a sixteenth-century drawing of a man being wafted through the skies supported

by a dozen swallows, each bearing a silken thread in its beak.

The sun became hotter and hotter, and always the sea, now a sapphire blue, stretched away into the infinite. Never a sail, never a wisp of smoke. It was monotonous and majestic. I travelled down the French coast in imagination. From Nantes I went to Cognac, and from Bordeaux I travelled down through the pine forests and the cork-trees to Bayonne. And soon we must be approaching the Spanish border.

We saw Portugal much sooner than I had expected. Perhaps I never quite believed that we should get there. The steward came along and pointed a finger downwards to explain that there was something worth looking at. On our left the coast was dimly to be seen. We seemed to be flying right at it. There was a piece of land jutting out into the sea, and right below us were two rocky islands, so small that only sea birds could live on them. At first I thought we must have struck the coast somewhere near Oporto, but I soon found that the rocky little islands formed part of the Berlenga group, and that the promontory was Cape Carvoeiro.

'We shall soon be at Cintra, where we land,' said the steward. 'It is the airport for Lisbon.'

The land was rugged and hilly, with innumerable little white houses dotted about. It was a mixture of grey and dark green, with splashes of white. We flew right over the coast for a few minutes, and then turned in to land. As we circled round the aerodrome I saw a family cutting the hay with scythes, and stacking it in a solid-wheeled cart drawn by a team of oxen. The women were cutting the hay, and the farmer was standing beside the oxen. His field was right on the border of the aerodrome, and not two hundred yards from where our machine came to rest. As I walked out on the tarmac I took in a great breath of hay and wild flowers, of thyme and honeysuckle. The airport buildings, a riot of blue and white, glistened in the sunshine. It was a fairyland airport, painted by a child with delicate pastels. A few officials ambled towards us, and the customs men were polite-



ness itself. I had been told about the Gestapo agents, who would be frowning in the background, waiting to pounce on our passports and cable back the news grimly to Berlin. They may have been there, but I never saw them. I was led out to a waiting car, where a tall young Portuguese with the most beautiful white teeth and flashing eyes jumped into the driving seat to take me to Lisbon.

Very soon I would be in the most-talked-of neutral capital in Europe—Lisbon, city of spies and plenty!

THE drive into the city through twenty-five kilometres of country was sheer joy. I was elated to see the olive-trees and the vineyards and the honeysuckle covering the hedges like veils of yellow gossamer and sending out its sweet scent. The wheat was ripe for cutting, and poppies and cornflowers grew between the ears. Women passed us clothed all in black, and carrying pitchers of baked clay on their heads; children darted out from village streets, and looked at us with big wondering eyes, their faces browned with the sun. In the lanes wizened old men passed us riding their sure-footed donkeys. My Portuguese driver wanted to show me how fast he could drive, which I would have been perfectly willing to take for granted. He had no eye for the strawberry beds heavy with fruit, or for the cherry-trees whose branches were brightly laden. It was strange and exhilarating to see advertisements in a foreign tongue, to pass an occasional prehistoric motor bus driven by some substitute for gasoline and plying from one village inn to the next. As a renewal of contact with Portugal this drive had an intimacy that a mere railway journey would have lacked. The wayside scenes would have delighted any painter, and they were almost biblical. The hills were violet as in Greece, and in the distance we caught occasional glimpses of the sea. From time to time we would pass a child standing on a tuft of grass holding a goat by a string, for goats tear up the grass more than any other four-footed thing, and farmers like to have them browse where they do no harm to their own land. In the suburbs of the city new buildings were going up apace, and the shops were filled with oranges, with lemons, and with pineapples—ripe pineapples from Brazil, the sister land across the ocean, which the Portuguese colonized in the sixteenth century. This wealth which I had expected was, nevertheless, surprising to my fellow-traveller who had seen none of these fruits for so many years. Wonderful bananas from the Canary Islands fringed



People do not stop singing in the streets until three or four in the morning, and there is music in their voices. The honeysuckle that I admired on the way from Cintra was as potent in the streets of the city as in the hedgerows. One smelt it everywhere, and it came into my room through the open french windows each morning.

By the time I had bathed and changed my clothes it was too late for me to ring anybody up and invite myself to dinner; but I was bubbling over with excitement, and the urge to make personal contact with the city. I therefore rang the porter, and asked him to find me a taxi so that I could be driven slowly round to refresh my rather limited knowledge of the topography.

I knew enough about Lisbon to remember that three main streets lead from this square in straight lines to the Praça de Dom Pedro Quarto, or Rossio, which is the centre of life and movement, so I told the driver to turn into the middle one, which is called the Rua Augusta. He was to follow me slowly while I got out and walked. I must say that he seemed very agreeable to this whim of mine, and crawled along as respectfully in my rear as if he had been in charge of a post-chaise. Most of the shops were closed by this hour, but it was not yet dark, and the evening was very warm, so that I was well content to gaze into the windows. Although I was prepared to find the shops in Lisbon filled with all sorts of pleasant things, I was surprised by the abundance of luxury goods, the like of which I had not seen since my last visit to Paris. The Rua Augusta was a woman's paradise. Soon I was to discover that it was the same in all the main shopping arteries in Lisbon, and even more so in the Rua Garrett. There was every perfume, lipstick, powder, cream, eyeblack, and other artifice to beauty produced before the war by the great French perfumers and dressmaking houses. The windows were stacked with the perfumes and beauty preparations of Guerlain and Lanvin and Chanel, and every other great name. I was not yet able to tell whether these were still streaming in from Paris, or whether they had been here since the war days. There were displays of stockings of every

shade. There were the most lovely leather bags and hand-made blouses in chiffon, in lace, and in satin. The shoe shops looked as if they had come under the Italian influence. The shoes were well made, but though they had high heels the insteps were solid. There was nothing new in this fashion, but what struck me most was that there was little else. There were jewellers whose windows were filled with gold bracelets—not all of them of real gold, but they shone brightly, and I noticed that nearly every Portuguese woman wore at least four on her left wrist, this barbaric instinct doubtless coming from her Moorish blood. A newsagent-tobacconist displayed all the Paris daily papers, and my heart almost stopped beating. I had not seen a French paper for two years. Most of them looked unchanged at first glance, except that the newsprint was a brownish colour. *Paris-Soir*, which had in peace days the greatest evening circulation in the world, had degenerated into a poor-looking sheet, only a quarter of its former size. I took up the *Matin*, and glanced at the front page, and then threw it down with a feeling of disgust. Everything about it reflected Dr. Goebbels and German propaganda.

Though still anxious to explore the shops I hesitated about paying off my taxi-driver, so I told him to drive as far as the Avenida Palace and wait for me in the courtyard. He looked just as happy to do this as anything else, and went off with a broad smile.

I tried to figure out how prices compared to London. I had been given about one hundred escudos to the pound, so that silk stockings worked out at about six shillings a pair, and one could buy quite a good pair of shoes in excellent leather for twenty-five shillings.

As I came into the main square called the Rossio a little boy ran after me with an English newspaper, dated the day before. It was certainly a rapid service, and might even have been quicker, for had we not brought the morning's papers by air? I shook my head negatively, but the little boy was surprised. He put a finger on the date and shook it, exclaiming:

*'But very new very new!'*

Again I declined, so he offered me an *Illustrated London News*. When I declined that also he whipped a Berlin newspaper out of a bag and started to try and sell it to me in German, going through the whole comedy anew. I shook him away after a time, only to be taken on by another boy, who started with his German newspapers, ending up with *The Times*. It must be trying for these lads not to know on which side of the fence one is, but that is one of the minor embarrassments of living in Lisbon.

The Rossio is a splendid square, and until the eighteenth century was the scene of public executions, *autos-da-fé*, bull-fights, and all manner of public displays. There are some large and spacious cafés, into which women are never invited, and there is the office of the newspaper *O Secunio*, which writes the latest telegrams in chalk on giant blackboards on its façade so that people may stop to read them and comment on the news. This corner of the square is the most popular. It is a meeting-place for the young bloods of the town in the early evening, who stand on the kerb while the taxi-cabs, tramways, and private cars swirl round in the shadow of the old Moorish castle of São Jorge, that dominates the scene from the top of the opposite hill. The newspaper kiosks are probably the most comprehensive of any in Europe at war, for their façades are hung with the newspapers and magazines of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. Photographs of Nazi generals on the Eastern Front scowl across the entrance to the main kiosk at the latest picture of Mr. Winston Churchill, who returns the compliment with his bull-dog expression and lips tightened round a half-smoked cigar. The atmosphere is one of strict neutrality, in spite of what everybody may individually think. But when the owner of the drug store puts out pictures of the Luftwaffe, his next-door neighbour fills his windows with photographs of the British Navy in action, and when a straw-haired youth of Portuguese mien refused to buy the *Tatler* from a little newsboy just in front of me I heard the archer cry after him: 'Perhaps you're a dirty German, eh?' Possibly this may have been



Lisbon: 'The newspaper kiosks are probably the most comprehensive in Europe. . . .'  
 'Marie-Chaire,' published in Lyons, France; 'Mujer,' the Spanish woman's weekly; and 'Grazia,' from Milan, Italy.





If you walk to the top of the square and then bear left you will come to the Avenida Palace, where I used to stay in peacetime. From here the magnificent Avenida da Liberdade sweeps up to the new part of the city.

Before the war we had some friends in Paris who owned one of the most profitable businesses in France. The man adored his wife, and we used to take her out shopping when they came to London. At the time of the Blum Government our friends took a flat in London, because many people at that time really thought there would be a revolution in France. We looked after the flat for them until our friends decided that war in Europe was a more imminent danger than revolution at home, and so they took away the gold they had stored in the vaults of a London bank and cancelled their flat. They bought houses in the countries they believed most likely to remain neutral, and did many other things that rich people do when they are afraid of losing their money. They had talked to me about a house they owned in Portugal, and as I knew that they had big business interests in the country, I was anxious to find out what had happened to them.

It is my experience that the head porters of luxury hotels are often able to give one invaluable information, and it was for this reason that I was anxious to look in at the Avenida Palace. I thought that if I could discover my friends I should obtain some light on what was happening to big business in France—or whatever big business had not been taken over completely by the Germans.

The head porter of the Avenida sits behind a little desk in the rather small and grimy entrance hall. His uniform, though covered with braid, is rather grubby. All day long he answers questions fired at him in a dozen different languages. He never gets mixed up, and even at his rush hour I have never heard him answer a German in English or an Italian in French, but his expression remains sibylline, and he smokes thin black cigars which, when he is not puffing at them, rest delicately on the edge of a match-box on his desk. It is very seldom that the head porter does anything else but answer questions. He has underlines to do his trading.

One of these shouts down the telephone, and another hands out the keys. The noise is indescribable.

I took my turn at the desk and waited to place my question, feeling rather like a pilgrim at Delphi.

Beside me hung a printed notice giving the time of arrival and departure of the air services to all parts of Germany. That is what makes Lisbon such an extraordinary place—a great junction, where the belligerents meet on common ground.

The porter looked at me as he solemnly puffed at his black cigar.

‘I’ve not seen your friends here for several months,’ he answered. ‘But you probably know that they own a château about a hundred miles away on the other side of the Tagus?’

‘Can you give me the address?’

The head porter thought for a moment, and took a huge address book from a shelf behind him. Having turned the pages he found what he was looking for and answered:

‘Why, yes. Here it is. You may take it down.’

He handed me the book while he turned to answer a question put to him by a woman beside me.

I made a note of the address, but my eye glanced down the well-filled page. Here indeed was a book worth its weight in gold! Conjure up for yourself all the famous names in international society before the war, and then begin wondering what has happened to them. The great banker who was always with that famous actress in Deauville? The marvellous painter you used to meet at Cannes and at gala nights at the Ambassadeurs? Are they dead, or are they alive? Are they collaborating with the Nazis or have they escaped to America? All these questions were answered for me by this precious tome. How dearly would I have liked to take it away. I was surprised that the head porter did not snatch it away from me as I was examining the pages so thoughtfully.

After a time he turned from the guest he had been talking to and looked in my direction. I felt almost guilty.

‘My friends live a long way from here,’ I said. ‘May I ask you to put a call through and find out whether they are now in residence?’

The head porter made a sign to a member of his staff, who made guttural noises down the mouthpiece of a telephone. In ten minutes he had gathered the information that my friends were not at their chateau but in the Pyrenees. I was told that they were expected in Lisbon shortly, and I was given the name and address of their Portuguese agent.

I was beginning to make serious headway. To-morrow I would doubtless know all that there was to be known about them.

My taxi-driver was patiently waiting for me out in the courtyard, and I instructed him to drive me slowly up the Avenida da Liberdade, that I might see more of the life of the city. The big cinemas were nearly all showing American pictures, and I was surprised that except for a few short news reels the Axis appeared to have no influence over the film world. There were pastry-cooks still open, and their shops were filled with jam tarts and cakes and chocolate. The fruiterers delighted the eye, for there were masses of strawberries and cherries, oranges, lemons, bananas, and pineapples. Here were the night clubs and the smart restaurants. The avenue is very wide, and between the two main traffic lines there are gardens in which the Portuguese take coffee or sip iced drinks under coloured parasols that are brilliantly lit at night. I thought it would be a good idea to tell my taxi to stop a moment that we might take a cup of coffee ourselves. I felt I owed him that. I did not know that his petrol ration was now so small that this assignment, with its frequent interruptions, was extremely congenial to him. He would be able to charge me by the hour, and not by the distance covered. He drew up beside the kerb, and we took a table by a little lake with water-lilies and a sort of artificial babbling brook. It was very pleasant sitting out in the evening air, but I suddenly realized that there were only men around me. Married women are not supposed to leave their homes in the evening. This survival of Moorish custom is rather disconcerting, and I decided to leave. It was getting dark, and the lights of the city were going up like pearl necklaces round the two hills. Everybody in London had told me how

surprised I would be to find a city with all the lights on, but although I had not, in truth, seen such a thing for nearly two and a half years, I felt myself slipping back into this pleasantness so easily and so naturally that I never gave it another thought. London felt a very long way away. It was impossible to believe that I had left the English country-side behind me only that morning. I am not sure if I would not have had trouble, at that precise moment, to visualize a black-out, so quickly does one revert to pre-war conditions. A thousand coloured lights played round the city.

On my way back to my hotel, which is only five minutes from the corner of the Rossio, where the newspaper *O Seculo* stands, I decided to call the following morning on a Portuguese for whom I had a letter of introduction, and who could doubtless give me news of the many friends I had left in Paris, for now I was on the Continent, and once more within reach of people in the forbidden lands. My pulse beat faster as I walked in the moonlight up the Rua Garrett, smartest shopping centre in Lisbon, that led to my hotel. I had scribbled the man's address on a sheet of writing paper before leaving London, and I could hardly wait for the moment when I knocked at the door of his office. At last I was on the threshold of adventure.

HIS office was near the fruit market, and at the entrance to the building, like Chinese monkeys, crouched three boot-blacks behind their little footstools. Beyond them a wide, creaking staircase led up four stories to the office where I was received by a wizened little woman dressed in black. A lad whom I took to be the office boy was addressing envelopes, and a girl of perhaps nineteen sat behind a sewing machine, fashioning the crown of a straw hat. The girl had enormous, caressing eyes, with lashes so long that one might almost have taken them for artificial ones. But Portuguese women know the value of their eyes, and besides flashing them and making them speak as rapidly and eloquently as the mouth, they paint the lashes and pencil the corners to exaggeration. The wide use of make-up surprised me as much as anything, and made me wonder whether I was not influenced by the contrast with England, where we use it so much less since the war began.

The office in which I found myself resembled that of any modest silk merchant in the city of London. There was a white deal table in the centre, on which stood nothing in particular; and there were some long tables on each side of the room with Portuguese-made calicoes and a few rolls of pre-war French woollens. A very lovely little straw hat rested on a stand. The man I had come to see was not at home, but it was made clear to me by a flow of words and a great deal of kindly gesticulation that I could either stay or return in ten minutes, but the office boy solved the question by offering me a chair. The old lady said a lot of things very quickly that I did not understand, and the girl went on stitching her hat.

My trader arrived before long. He was of medium build, and wore horn-rimmed spectacles, but the chief thing about him was that he had a face which struck a sympathetic chord in me. I knew that if I ever needed his good offices he would be delighted to offer them. He gave a few orders

to his small staff, and led me into a tiny room where stood a desk and some files. I told him that I had called at the general post office, but that they would accept no letters for Paris other than those which the Germans called 'business letters.' These had to travel by air mail to Stuttgart, whence they were sent by rail to Paris. No letters of a private nature were accepted. I had been stunned by this news, not because I expected that it would be easy to mail letters to Paris, but because of the journey through Stuttgart! This seemed to place Paris on the level of a provincial German town.

'You are right,' said my friend. 'The mails have just closed down altogether on private letters.'

We went on to discuss other things, and I told him that I had not yet had time to go shopping, but that I had noticed how rich the shops were, and how curious it seemed to see such lavish displays of stockings.

'They are made in Portugal,' said my friend. 'We are not allowed any longer to import luxury goods.'

'Then all those perfumes from Paris are old stocks?'

'Yes, we are living on our reserves as far as goods from abroad are concerned, but we are now making cosmetics in a big way in Portugal, for the country is wealthy, and there is a great demand.'

He led me back into his showroom, and brought down from a shelf a roll of material for beach suits.

'This is made here,' he explained. 'You see that it's nearly as good as a Rodier material.'

'Yes, indeed.'

'You must lunch with me, and afterwards I will take you to Estoril.' He waved his hands. 'But I haven't told you anything about myself.'

He explained that he had started life as a *couturier*, building up one of the most fashionable houses in Lisbon, but had been ruined in 1931 when Great Britain came off gold; for the Portuguese currency was then allied to our own, and he was faced with heavy commitments in francs in Paris, where he bought his materials. Many important French wool and silk

firms gave him a fresh start by appointing him as their Portuguese representative, and he was doing very well when the war brought his commerce to an end. He now had a frivolity shop at Estoril, the Portuguese Riviera, one of Europe's most famous playgrounds.

We travelled down on the electric railway after lunch. The train stopped at every station, but I enjoyed each moment of the journey. For the first few minutes we skirted dockland and the seaplane base, but soon we came upon the most beautiful tropical gardens, with lovely views of the Tagus estuary. A great fleet of four- and five-masted sailing ships was preparing to put out to sea. It is the only fleet of its kind left in the world, and it was bound for a six months' journey to Newfoundland for cod fishing.

Estoril is just beyond the mouth of the Tagus. It is built around a little cove, where the waters of the Atlantic break in billows on the golden sand. The glare and the heat are terrific. The railway line is just above the beach, and under it there is a picturesque cocktail bar which is in the shade. In front of this stand tables and parasols where you may have cold drinks overlooking golden sands burning in the equatorial heat.

And yet people lie out in the sand getting toasted; which appears midsummer madness. A Scandinavian blonde, her eyes protected by dark glasses, was lying stretched out at full length in a bathing suit. Her body had become almost as dark as that of a negress. A broad-shouldered man with broad-rimmed spectacles, and wearing an alpaca jacket, went over to hand her a drink.

'That is the head of the fifth column in Portugal,' said my friend. 'You will meet many Germans here.'

He sipped at his vermouth, and added as he looked round the beach: 'And also Hungarians and Czechs and Italians. It is the most cosmopolitan spot in Portugal.'

My friend was anxious that I should see his shop, so we crossed the railway line to find ourselves facing a great sweep of gardens, at the top end of which stood the casino in a dazzle of white. The place has obviously been modelled on

Monte Carlo. Two lines of little luxury shops in arcades ran in semicircles round the gardens, and the big hotels were on the right-hand side. I liked the pride of possession that my friend showed in his shop. He wanted me to look at things, and comment on them, and to say whether I liked them, and if one could get as good in England.

I recognized the straw hat I had seen in his showroom, which the girl must have brought down. These Italian straws were all the rage. Most of them were decorated with bunches of artificial flowers, and many had veils of different colours. There were big white bags and beach suits cut out of the material I had seen in his office, and there were printed dresses and scarves which I was almost shocked to see, remembering that holidays at the seaside are things of the past in England. There were big bangles and bracelets of Toledo work and other odds and ends.

We looked for a moment into the palatial hotel next door. It was the nearest thing to the dream of a Hollywood film producer I have ever seen. The rooms were immense, the windows stretched from floor to ceiling, and one's heels sank into the carpets. There were huge marble pillars and a gorgeous dining-room with cream-coloured blinds to keep out the glare of the sun. In the lounge a young man with only one leg was talking to three women. He nodded to my friend as we passed, which gave me the opportunity later to ask who he was, and I learned that he was a Spaniard who was maimed in the civil war.

The avenue leading to the casino was shaded by mimosa trees, many of them still in bloom, and these golden boughs that one associates so closely with the Riviera being close to the ground, I was tempted to pick some. The casino was deserted at this hour. It looked like some white-rambling palace belonging to a sleeping princess. There was a small night club, very tastefully done up, that only opened at 2 a.m., and a huge restaurant overlooking the central gardens leading down to the sea. My friend suggested that after the war Estoril would only be some five hours distant by air from London, and he asked me whether I thought it would



take the place of Monte Carlo in popularity. I think he would have liked to be rich enough to buy up some of the adjoining land as a speculation, for it was not expensive, and one could obtain the most sumptuous villas for about one thousand pounds at the current rate of exchange, but no foreigner could export any money.

We crossed over to the opposite arcade, and sat down on the terrace of a café. It was the shady side, and we were now hot after our short walk.

At the table next to ours there was a party of people—some of them Americans, some of them speaking French. I was intrigued by a woman of a pleasant manner, a woman in the forties, I judged, whose features appeared familiar to me, but whose name I could not conjure up. Neither could I think where I had met her before, if in truth I had met her.

While I glanced at this woman with almost impolite curiosity, searching in my mind for her name, I noticed that she was considering me in the same way, so that in the end I leaned over and said to her:

‘Excuse me, madam, but I have a feeling that we know each other.’

‘I also,’ she answered. ‘Perhaps it would help if I introduced myself.’

She was the French wife of one of the American diplomats who had been stationed in Paris, and her husband, who was with her, spoke almost perfect French. They, and the other members of the party, were amongst the United States diplomats who had been interned by the Germans when America entered the war, and they were sailing home the following day on one of the specially chartered ships with all lights that would cross the Atlantic from Lisbon. Here, at least, were several intelligent people who had crossed France from east to south only a few days ago, and they had lived for many months as ordinary mortals in Paris, free to go about where they pleased.

I plied her with questions, and she tried to tell me everything she had heard and seen during the last two years. It is an extraordinary experience, this thirst for knowledge on the

one hand, and the attempt, on the other, to crowd a thousand impressions into half an hour's talk. We forgot all about Estoril, and the mimosa-trees, and the fact that there was a party of Germans only a few yards away sipping iced drinks as if they had never committed the most savage barbarism in civilized history. She told me about her own women friends in Paris, and how they had behaved from the time the Germans walked in, and what splendid sacrifices many had made; but she added that the Germans were now trying to undermine the race by cutting off pharmaceutical supplies so that the death roll from tuberculosis was reaching appalling figures. I wanted desperately to know all these things which I had vaguely guessed, but when I had been told them I almost wished she had remained silent.

But I suddenly realized that I also was going to be cross-examined. I was the first person from England they had seen since Dunkirk! They knew nothing more of the Battle of Britain than what they had been told by the Germans. They wondered whether anything was left of London, and were without any true idea of our strength. Their knowledge of America was equally limited. For two years we had lived on opposite sides of the great impenetrable barrier.

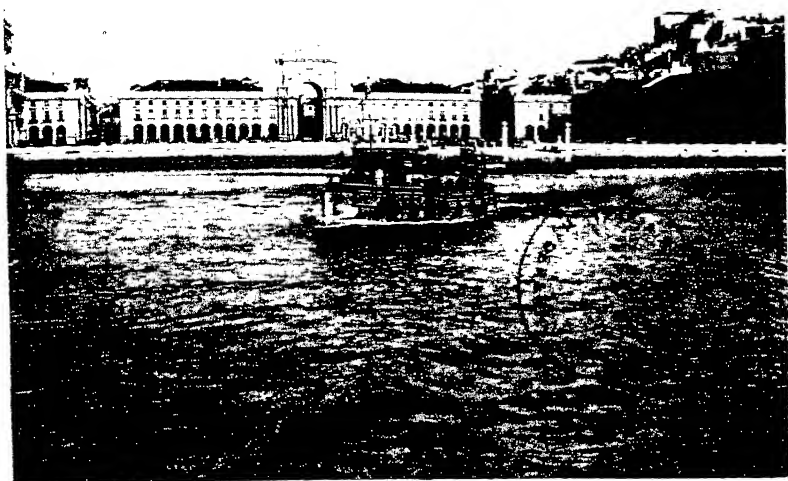
One of the younger Americans, instead of returning home, was going to London, and he was interested by the fact that he had been offered pound notes for the equivalent of about six shillings. They seemed a good bargain to him, and he was anxious to know whether he could purchase some and bring them safely to London.

I was obliged to disillusion him. After the fall of France there was so much British currency ready to fall into German hands that the British Treasury gave neutral countries twenty-four hours to exchange their stocks, after which the pound note was no longer legal tender. Consequently no person returning to England is allowed to bring back sterling. Much the same thing was happening to the peseta, which the Germans were counterfeiting. Pesetas were extremely cheap in Lisbon, but the Spanish authorities forbade their entry into Spain.

I returned to Lisbon that evening, my mind filled with the things that I had heard from these Americans at Estoril. I tried to remember exactly what they had told me, and to build up a picture of what was happening in France, but I was frankly disappointed. I had been told a few more horrors; I had learned about many more acts of heroism in occupied territory, but such things could be gathered in London. I was determined to look elsewhere for my information. I wanted to know what people 'on the other side' were thinking and saying. I wanted mostly to know what sort of books French people were reading, and I decided to see for myself as soon as possible.

THERE was a fine bookshop in the Rue Garrett with an entire window devoted to French literature since the fall of Paris, and before going into the shop I looked at the titles of the newest volumes. The place of honour was occupied by a history of French marshals from 1185 until 1942, by Louis Chardigny, and it was obvious that the book was written to flatter Marshal Pétain. Black-bearded Louis Gillet, an academician, who was in London shortly before the collapse, writing for a French newspaper, while his four sons were at the front, had written a book on James Joyce (*Stèle pour James Joyce*), and Georges Goyau, a fellow academician, published a volume called *Pensées et méditations*.

Here was something rather more interesting. A book called *Pour obtenir des prêtres et rendre Dieu à la France* ('To obtain priests and give France back to God'), by G. Lemesle, inciting the younger generation to take up priesthood, for it is a well-known fact that the Germans did everything they could on arrival in France to seek favour with the Roman Catholic Church, believing that if her privileges were restored the priests would preach a policy of collaboration. The dust-cover of a book called *Pour nous la France* ('France for us!'), by Robert Vacher, showed a French blue-shirt wearing the uniform that Jacques Doriot's movement had so slavishly copied from the Nazis. Paul Allard had written a book called *Comment est tombé la ligne Maginot* ('How the Maginot Line fell'); and considerable prominence was given to A. J. Eminin's *La Dame aux ailettes*, with a wide band round it saying that 'This is the novel that is not published in England.' Mme Colette's new novel was probably the most important literary addition to the season. It was called *Le feu de Carnéillon*, and was purely a love story, though the chief characters (well-known people in Paris before the war) were nicely veiled. I mention it specially to show that in the choice of the few volumes without any obvious Nazi pro-



*Lisbon from the Tagus*





paganda, for just as the Germans closed the chemists' shops to spread disease, so they influenced French literature to warp the mind. One volume, however, stood apart from the rest. It was called *L'Heure qui change*, by the great novelist Jacques de Lacretelle, and it was published not in France, but in Switzerland, which argued a certain degree of liberty. The book was a series of essays, many of which had been written in France since the German occupation, and they covered such subjects as 'The Parisian,' the 'Index of 1940,' and 'Portugal.'

I turned to the 'Index of 1940' with considerable interest. Lacretelle started by quoting the following statement issued by the French publishers after the fall of Paris:

'Desirous of creating a healthier atmosphere and a more objective appreciation of European problems, the French publishing firms have decided to withdraw from sale a number of books. These books, by their lying and tendentious character, have systematically poisoned French public opinion. The present measures have, in particular, been taken against the publications of political refugees and Jewish writers who, by betraying French hospitality, created a war which they hoped would bring them profit. The German authorities have noted with satisfaction this initiative taken by the French publishing houses, and will take similar steps themselves.'

Lacretelle points out with a touch of sarcasm that he doubts whether this manifesto on the part of the French publishing houses was spontaneous. He then goes on to analyse the books placed on the index, which, of course, include those of the exiled Germans and Austrians such as Zweig, Ludwig Mann, and Vicki Baum. On the French side nearly all the books about the war of 1939-40 were suppressed, such as the *Mémorial de la Guerre blanche* and the *Chroniques de l'année 1939* by Duhamel; the *Étapes allemandes* by Henry Bordeaux; and *Retour du front* by Dorgelès.

'What are the conclusions we may draw from this index?' asks Lacretelle. He says that many authors who expected all their works to be placed on the index were rightly alarmed.

Their pride may have been touched but 'not all who wished to be were persecuted.' He asks: 'Is this sufficient to justify a rich collaboration between the writers of France and Germany?'

Not so, he answers, for our authors might well be disappointed to find that, during the last decade, there has not come out of Germany a single volume sufficiently notable to allow a feeling of reciprocity. And he adds that if the Germans really wish to impress readers in France they would do well to produce a Balzac or a Kipling.

At first I was tempted to criticize Lacretelle for being unduly cautious, but I was to learn that it requires a brave man to go as far as he does. At any rate could any denunciation of Vichy abandonment be more withering than these words in another of his essays?

'It is right that we should realize that too much abasement is incompatible with the vigorous campaign of regeneration that is being preached to the Frenchman. If each of us goes about saying that the Frenchman's character, his lightness of heart, his unpreparedness have caused his downfall; that our effete literature and decadent art were contributory factors . . . on what note are we to sound the bugle call to rally our people?'

I was to remember these words throughout my journey, when Frenchmen occasionally seemed to take a pride, while talking to me, of pointing out their own shortcomings in order to cover up their lack of initiative.

While still in this bookshop I fell to turning the pages of the latest issue of *Marie-Claire*.

Now, before the war, *Marie-Claire* was probably the best produced woman's weekly in the world. It was owned by M. Prouvost, whose *Paris-Soir* reached the largest evening net sale. *Marie-Claire* is not altogether a fashion paper, though its fashion notes are unrivalled. It talks to a woman about all the things she is interested in.

*Marie-Claire* is now published in Lyons, and I learned more about life in France by looking through its pages than by



talking to a dozen people. Quite the hardest thing that the French housewife has to face is washing without soap, for there is practically no soap to be had in France. Many of the advertisements in *Marie-Claire* were of soap substitutes. It was pointed out that not only was soap unobtainable, but that it was impossible to replace sheets and towels. *Marie-Claire* gives its own method for washing without soap; but adds that it is a very long business, and it is not very good for the things being washed. As no fats of any kind are allowed to be used in face creams, *Marie-Claire* suggests boiling marsh mallow roots in rose water, and adding starch to the liquid thus obtained when cold. And now what are you to give a friend to eat who suddenly pays you a surprise call? I quote these lines exactly: 'Si vous manquez de pain, faites une fausse omelette aux légumes, un peu de farine, sel, poivre et eau' ('If you have no bread, make a mock omelet with vegetables, a little flour, some salt, pepper, and water'). As milk is unobtainable, a reader asks what is the smallest plot of grass you can keep a cow on, and an advertisement says candidly: 'Our terrible anxieties, our sleepless nights, and our lack of food give us all stomach trouble. . . .'

Perhaps the most terrible mockery was that the great dress-makers, not to let their many employees starve completely, or be taken away in bondage to Germany to make munitions for the Nazis, staged a very important summer dress show. Although these models influenced Frenchwomen's dress by adaptation of existing clothes, the beautiful clothes were, of course, never worn in France. The mannequins took train to Lyons, where the show was held for Spanish, Portuguese, and South American buyers. The result was to be seen all over Lisbon and in Madrid, as I shall later describe. *Marie-Claire* gives details of this epic journey, with photographs of the dress designers and mannequins eating *ersatz* food in the restaurant car; of their passing through the German customs at the frontier between Occupied and Unoccupied France, and of their stay in a newly opened hotel in Lyons which consists of a number of old railway coaches on a siding in the goods yard.

The saddest thing about this show was its outstanding merit. Amongst the designers taking part were Mme Lanvin, Martial et Armand, Nina Ricci, Roger Worth, Jacques Heim, Robert Piguet, and a host of other people we all know by name. Young Boucheron is shown pinning jewels on the dresses of the mannequins with the caption: 'Butterflies of a single night.'

The coat and skirt was to take first place in the wardrobe, but with the jacket much longer, very tight at the waist, and moulded to the hips. It was to be fastened by at least three buttons, often in pairs, and there were innumerable pockets on the hips. One famous designer showed three pockets, one above another, on one side only. The skirt was short and classical.

Meanwhile, the modistes like Mme Agnès, Mme Suzy, and Mme Jeanne Lanvin designed both large and small hats of straw, most of them decorated with flowers, and nearly all with coloured veils. There was every kind of straw, from the natural corn colour, decorated with poppies and cornflowers, to the little white boater, 1900 style.

Parisian women saw the pictures and wanted to copy them, but they could buy no materials whatsoever, so *Marie-Claire* comes to the rescue and gives suggestions for transforming pre-war coats and skirts by taking down the hem of the jacket and rounding off the corners. The waist could be tightened, and the flared skirt made straight.

As soon as I went back into the Rua Garrett my eyes began to notice the effect of what I had just read, for towards five o'clock in the evening this street is as pre-war Bond Street on a bright afternoon in mid-season. All the prettiest women are to be seen there. In fact, it is about the only time of day one sees the well-to-do Portuguese woman, who, as I have already said, does not, by custom, go out in the evening. The young Portuguese mother dresses in the very height of fashion, and is accompanied by an elderly nurse, who either wheels the baby in the pram or perches the child on her shoulder. I was to see such a picture a few moments after leaving the bookshop, and I will describe it exactly so that

doubtless judged that I was capable of the greatest follies, for she brought out a pair which she handed me mysteriously under a roll of material, muttering: 'One hundred and eighty escudos.'

She appeared to think she was doing me an extraordinary favour, and I hardly liked to disappoint her, but that was certainly the most expensive pair of stockings I have ever bought, for it worked out at one pound sixteen shillings!

FRIENDS eager to show me Lisbon insisted on taking me to the Crystal, which was then the most fashionable night-club.

The Crystal is just beyond the Avenida Palace, in the Avenida da Liberdade, where the cafés are in the centre of the road. The night-club is only part of the Crystal, the main portion of which is a garish sort of beer-house, with all the walls covered by mirrors. One enters the night-club from the street down a flight of stairs, and if it is after midnight the place may be half full. It is a big room, modern, beautifully air-conditioned, with a balcony at one end, the orchestra and the dance floor at the other. There is a long bar near the door.

We were given sofa seats against the wall, rather like at the old Embassy Club in London, but although the orchestra was excellent, the atmosphere was a little frigid. The tables round the floor were nearly all occupied by dance hostesses, who looked as tired as their rather tawdry dresses, and there did not seem to be enough men to keep them busy. A rather good-looking young Portuguese impresario came over to talk to us, and he said that nearly all the girls were Spanish. Some of them would be appearing in a cabaret later. The impresario was a dancer himself, and he carried on a conversation in rather curious French, having danced with his wife in Marseilles, and to prove it he sat down beside me and emptied out his wallet until he found a rather faded photograph showing his act. He seemed to be rather bored with Lisbon, where he thought that his talents were being wasted, and he explained that he had turned down offers to play in Berlin and in Milan because, although the Germans and the Italians offered good money, it was no good unless you could bring your earnings home. His dream was to go to Rio de Janeiro, and this might happen one day, but the fare was three thousand escudos, and he would have to take

his wife, making six thousand in all. By this time there were rather more people dancing and four of the hostesses were being invited alternately by a party of Americans and three Germans sitting on the other side of the room. I watched this for some time, wondering if such rivalry might not lead to an international incident, but the Americans took two of the girls to their table, where they ordered a bottle of champagne, leaving the other two for the enemy.

I had expected to find this night-club a hive of international intrigue, crowded with people of all nations, but in this I was disappointed. Though Lisbon was undoubtedly the most prosperous European capital its night life was almost non-existent, and there was something very unreal about the Crystal, where the atmosphere was frigid. I have already said that the Portuguese husband seldom allows his wife out after dark, so that one had no opportunity of meeting the more important families of the capital. It requires more than a few bored foreigners dancing with ill-clad dance hostesses imported from Spain to rival the warmth of a London restaurant at night.

We thought that we might do better to finish the evening at one of the other places in town, but everywhere we were equally disillusioned. At a small restaurant near the Rossio a man came over to greet me, asking me if I would lunch with him the following day at the seaside resort of Caparica, on the other side of the Tagus. He left me wondering who he was, when I suddenly had a vision of him at the offices of a London travel bureau, where I had often met him before the war. True to his promise he arrived at my hotel the next morning, and I discovered that he spoke Portuguese and Spanish perfectly, and was one of those men who take life with a perpetual smile. His duties obliged him to travel frequently between Lisbon and Madrid, and he was well informed about all the things one wants to know when travelling. He asked me if I would mind walking as far as a little wine shop opposite the Figueira market, because he wanted to say good-bye to a member of his staff, an ex-London policeman, who was returning home by ship. We found





about a dozen burly Englishmen, each with a large tankard of foaming beer, sitting round a small table in a picturesque little bar-restaurant.

I had not yet been inside the market, and while my escort was saying good-bye to his friends I wandered into the glass-domed enclosure. The fruit and flowers were in the centre, and it struck me that never, anywhere in the world, had I seen such a riotous profusion of colour; or could it be that three years of war had made me forget such plenty? There were stalls almost completely hidden by pineapples, and the alleyways were strewn with cherries, strawberries, and green and black figs. There were oranges in huge wicker baskets, and hands of small, ripe, luscious Canary bananas hung from the ceiling. There were cheeses of every kind, and lettuces and green peas, and the countrywomen in their picturesque dresses, coloured aprons, and white bonnets, moved silently through the crowds. Many of the stallholders had their babies with them, and when I stopped to hold out a finger to some little ball of pink flesh rolled up in a blanket and gurgling happily in the tray of a weighing machine, the mother would start telling me some story I didn't understand, her face wreathed in proud smiles. You had only to tarry a second in the flower market to be approached by half a dozen women recounting the unique beauty of their blooms. Their rich voices rose in a crescendo as they led you very gently by the arm to their stall, their dark eyes flashing and their white pearly teeth gleaming. Their movements were so gentle that you could not take offence, and there was charm in all they did, and if you smilingly regretted but found it impossible to buy their huge, prickly moss-roses gathered fresh that morning (though it was a crime to refuse), they never bore ill will, but made a little curtsy and invited you to 'come again another day.'

My escort came to meet me, and we walked down the Rua Augusta towards the Praça de Comercio, where a ferry service runs across the Tagus. It was during this walk that I saw the rays of the sun gleaming on something hidden between two cobble-stones. I was about to tread on it when I instinctively



stopped, and stooping down I picked up a tiny crucifix. Some woman must have lost it from the chain it is the custom to wear around the neck. I tried to fix it to some niche in the wall, between two shops, thinking with what gratitude the owner would find it, but then I reflected how meagre was the chance of its rightful owner ever looking up against the wall, and I decided to keep it, fixing it to a gold bracelet I was wearing.

We went up on the deck of the ferry boat and waited contentedly for it to move away. A tiny breeze prevented one from baking in the sun, but, nevertheless, it was very hot. A few big ships were moored in mid-stream, and there was a dirty little collier with 'Eire' painted right across her, but what charmed me most were those vessels with the curious pointed sails, in which one can see barrels of wine stacked on the narrow deck. You can imagine yourself looking at some print of the seventeenth century. We glided slowly across the river, and came to rest beside a sister ship at a little dock, but by now there was quite a swell, and the two boats rose and fell, lurching against each other and making it a very unpleasant task to jump from one to the other. A number of young Portuguese sailors stood helping the passengers to negotiate the jump, and they didn't altogether lose their time, for they received us in their arms with an enthusiasm that produced laughter all round.

Having been rescued before my companion I started to stroll along the picturesque wharf when a man came up behind and asked me something I didn't understand. I thought he was a taxi-driver, and intending to leave the hiring of a car to my companion, I passed on a little annoyed. But the man persisted, and finally took me by the arm. He then turned back the lapel of his coat in true American film manner, revealing a silver star, and muttered: 'Police internationale.'

No words strike more terror in the breast, for these international police, both in Portugal and in Spain, are said to be largely under German influence.

The man who had revealed his silver star was sturdy, short, and quite obviously of a high rank in the detective world.

He was wearing a light grey suit, and was accompanied by a rather anaemic Portuguese, dark and ill dressed. The man was really only asking me for my passport, but I was unable to make him understand that if he would wait a moment my companion would undoubtedly explain. He came at last, having wasted many precious moments in negotiating for a car to take us to the seaside, but I was relieved to see that nothing had ruffled his smiling countenance. He took in the situation at a glance, and though I was convinced that the police officer with the star was a German, my friend whipped out a card from his breast pocket, and putting it under the official's nose, said good-humouredly:

'We are colleagues of different nationalities.'

The man in the light suit responded immediately, and turned all smiles. The two men shook hands, exchanged cigars, and I was looked upon as a member of the family. I am surprised we did not end up by all having a drink together, but I was for going away as quickly as possible, and we jumped into the waiting taxi-cab.

The road we followed was truly beautiful, and ascended through vineyards, in which peaches were already ripening on the trees, and where cherries reddened in the sun. Old peasants rode slowly along the white roads on asses and mules, and farmhouses nestled amongst the olive-trees. There were fields of waving corn red with poppies, and the banks were alive with multicoloured weeds as beautiful as rare flowers. We wound our way up, the engine becoming very hot, to the top of a mountain range, from which one saw a wide expanse of sand and sea on the other side, and down we thundered along a winding, turning track, until we stopped outside a small hotel at Caparica.

We decided to keep the car while we lunched in the low room, where we were served with excellent local wine made from the vineyards through which we had passed, and we ate wonderful fish caught that morning by the fishermen hard by. There were people of every country, and one heard a babel of languages, French, Italian, German, Russian, and I know not what. After coffee we went down to the sea along

wooden boards placed on the sand, which was so dry and powdery that otherwise we would have sunk ankle deep in it. But the sand that had recently been washed by the waves was still damp and hard, and full of lovely pink sea-shells, some of them of great size and beauty, and every few yards there were caiques which the fishermen used—little boats with great eyes painted on the sides.

I have only seen sand so wide and so golden in the Vendée in France, and it had that in common with it that the vine seemed to flourish in it. But the glare of the sun on the water was terrific, and we feared to be burned, so after a short walk we returned to the car, to be driven back to the little port whence we had started our journey.

We arrived at the quay of Cacilhas just in time to see the ferry cast off, and so we had half an hour to lose. I was not altogether sorry, because this place has some extraordinary wine shops along the water's edge—great, tall, cool rooms, with white walls and bottles almost up to the ceiling. There's generally a bar near the entrance, and a restaurant running lengthways; and on either side of the entrance, on the quay itself, are eels and other fishes swimming about in buckets so that customers can choose what they fancy. These places were typically Portuguese, very clean and full of local colour. The restaurant part of one of the largest was still full when I looked in, because the Portuguese do not start lunch until 2 p.m. at the very earliest, but I was specially attracted by a gipsy woman bending over a table of nine or ten people whom I took to be holding a wedding reception.

What intrigued me was that the gipsy was carrying in the folds of her dress a baby who could certainly not be more than three or four days old. It had the most adorably wrinkled face, and a full crop of short, straight, black hair, that almost looked as if it was a wig stuck on with glue like the Japanese dolls we used to play with as children. I went over to the gipsy and asked her permission to stroke the baby's hair to see if it was real, and she broke out into a flood of monotonous incantation, not a word of which I could understand.

I had left my companion telephoning to somebody on the

quayside, and as soon as he put in an appearance I made him come and meet the gipsy, and ask her if she would read my hand if I crossed her palm with silver. She was only too willing, and let forth a torrent of words at an incredible speed, hardly stopping to take breath. Though I was convinced that she didn't even bother to look at the lines in my hand, I looked appealingly at my friend to see if he was taking it all in, but either the gipsy proved too much for him, or he was unwilling to communicate her remarks faithfully to me, for I got little change out of him except a homily about the evils of being superstitious.

This was the only disappointment of a wonderful day. I keep on wondering what that gipsy really did tell me.

A WOMAN journalist, who was once a colleague of mine in Paris, telephoned me one morning to ask me to lunch at her flat. She lived in the new quarter of the city, above the Avenida da Liberdade, and told me that she would like me to meet a Vichy Frenchman who represented an important news agency.

Accordingly, soon after one o'clock, I took a taxi, and drove to her apartment. It was in a modern concrete building, in a new street, and geraniums decorated the balconies and the white walls.

My former colleague's sitting-room had a huge bay window covering an entire side of the room, overlooking the courtyard, which was so full of domestic life that I could have spent hours looking out. All the neighbours' flats had back doors, and while the men were away at their offices or drinking coffee by themselves, the women and girls were looking after their homes. You could see them beating the carpets, running up and down the fire escapes, borrowing a brush or a duster, stopping for a little scandal, cleaning the silver, and ironing the clothes. It was the most entertaining cross-section of home life that you could wish for.

I had not been there long before the Vichy journalist arrived. He was the only newspaper man from unoccupied France to be accredited to Lisbon, but his agency was an important one, and in pre-war days his post would have been well paid. There was so much talk about Vichy collaboration that I was half expecting to find a man of decidedly pro-German views. He walked rather timidly into the room, a cadaverous young man, wearing the most threadbare suit I have ever set eyes on. This suit riveted my attention because it came to me as a shock to see an important newspaper man in such a condition. I remembered how immaculately the great French newspaper correspondents used to dress before the war, and with what assurance they stalked through the

chancelleries of Europe. But this suit had certainly been turned, and nothing now could save it. There were parts of the coat which were so worn that one felt that the wearer must take the greatest care in putting it on in order not to poke an arm through the flimsy threads.

- One felt that he needed a woman to look after him, and cheer him up, but his home had been in what was now Occupied France, and he told us that it was impossible for him to obtain a permit from the Germans to cross the line of demarcation. The members of his family were scattered and unable to communicate one with the other, and all of them were more or less on the verge of starvation.

In spite of the kindly understanding of our hostess, this lunch was one of the saddest I have ever attended, for this sick man, in his threadbare suit, robbed of his home and his family, his spirit broken and his body underfed, was too symbolic of the once great and proud nation to which he belonged.

What a mockery to him must have seemed the wealth of this thin strip of land called Portugal remaining uneasily on the fringe of a starving Europe.

I found in this man no trace of pro-German sympathies, but only the most complete breakdown of all his former beliefs. His spirit was broken, and he appeared robbed of any will-power. He was the most perfect example of that abasement of spirit which Lacretelle had referred to in his essay, and his willingness to accept defeat was the very antithesis to the proud resistance of his compatriot, General de Gaulle, against whose movement he spoke with the peevishness of a child. It was impossible to make him understand that the civilized world was looking to France for action rather than a *mea culpa*, deeds of bravery rather than humiliation.

I do not think I have ever found myself face to face with a man so completely demoralized, so anxious to analyse the defects of his nation, without the desire to seek inspiration from the glories of French history in the past to build the future. I was eventually to learn how many Frenchmen, especially in the occupied zone, were regenerating the nation

by amazing acts of daily heroism, but momentarily I was disheartened. His moral wreckage was too much in keeping with his threadbare suit.

I was almost glad to say farewell to my journalist friend and her colleague from Vichy.

Although a woman could not with any decency break into the male sanctuary which was the big café in the Rossio, somebody told me that there was a very smart *thé-dansant* on the third floor at five o'clock every evening, and that it would certainly be worth my while to look in if I really wanted to see how the Portuguese danced the tango. I had been so disappointed with the Crystal that I decided to look in there a couple of days before I was due to leave Lisbon for Madrid.

The entrance of the *thé-dansant* was not from the Praça de Dom Pedro Quarto, but by a lift from the back entrance in a narrow but picturesque street. I found myself in a large, low room, spotlessly clean and with painted walls. There were enormous french windows wide open on the Rossio, and a really outstanding orchestra whose members wore alpaca suits with red carnations in their buttonholes. There was a number of quite well-dressed Portuguese women sitting at individual tables against the walls, taking tea by themselves, and there was an equal number of extremely good-looking Portuguese men sitting demurely in front of long drinks they didn't touch at other tables. We were sufficiently high up not to see anything of the traffic in the busy square, but through the open windows one looked upon the gleaming walls of the old Moorish citadel, Castelo de São Jorge, high up on the opposite hill. Little red-brick houses nestled under the castle, and slept in the shade of acacia-trees.

The orchestra, which had been silent a moment, started to play again, and each man sitting at his table, by lifting an eyebrow, signified to his partner sitting at another table that she might meet him on the floor. Occasionally one would come over and touch a woman's arm with an air of polite

*camaraderie*, inviting her by a more personal method than a distant morse. So came a dancer to a woman sitting near me. He was small and slim, with the most caressing eyes I have ever seen in a man, and long eyelashes. His skin was a dark ochre, and he wore a flower in his buttonhole as large as a chrysanthemum. He was a languid dancer, but I have seldom seen anything so exquisitely perfect as his movements on the floor, and indeed every couple executed the most difficult South American dances with a technique that could hardly have been surpassed for brilliance. One had the pleasure of watching something well done with not a discordant note, for I was unable to see a single couple who were not obviously professionals. At about six o'clock the orchestra rested for a moment, and pages dressed like Eton boys with Eton jackets and starched collars came in with copies of the evening paper that had just come off the presses in the newspaper office at the corner of the Rossio. They handed a copy of the paper to each of the men, and then went back to collect the pennies, whereupon the men leaned back in their chairs, and, opening out the paper, became quite oblivious to anything else in the room, even when they happened to be sitting next to a woman, who obviously had no business so much as to glance at the headlines. I left somewhat bewildered with the feeling that by some horrible mistake I had wandered into a private club of expert tangoists.



FOR some time before I was due to leave Lisbon for Madrid I had heard the most harrowing stories of the journey by train. I was warned against it by knowing little nods and such expressions as: 'Well, I'd rather it were you than I.' There was, of course, an aeroplane service which I might have taken if it had not been for the fact that I had luggage; but I think that deep in my heart I wanted to travel by rail if only for the experience and the opportunity of seeing the countryside nearer than from the clouds. The chief objection I heard about the journey came from people who had never made it. They said that the Portuguese were so anxious that nothing should be exported from their country that they searched one at the frontier, and that they were especially strict about food. This caused me to give away a number of bars of chocolate that I had brought over with me from London in the hope of distributing them to hungry children in Madrid. These people also said that as soon as I arrived on Spanish territory the Nazi Gestapo, in the form of Spanish police, would be there to dissect the motives of my journey, and to spy upon me for the rest of my stay, if, indeed, I was lucky enough not to be thrown into jail. All my luggage would certainly be opened, and I should be questioned about every item. I might even be undressed, and I must of course be particularly careful not to carry any money with me, either Portuguese or Spanish, because the Portuguese would not let one take any of their currency out, and the Spanish would not allow one to bring any of theirs in.

If I had taken all these stories seriously I should have been out of my mind before reaching the station, but I had asked my security man, and he had, to a great extent, set my mind at rest. I had, however, entrusted him with a small bag of my more personal belongings, to take over with him two

days before my own departure, knowing that he would greet even the most sinister Nazi with a pat on the back and a cry of 'Colleague.'

I was sorry to leave Lisbon, the city of peace and plenty—sorry also to bid farewell to the people, who are amongst the most hospitable I know. The shop-women behind the counter welcome you with a smile as if they were really glad to see you, which I truly believe, and the men are as charming as they are well dressed. If they spend a prodigious amount of money on their neckties it is doubtless from a desire to please. The profession of necktie vendor in the streets of Lisbon must certainly be more lucrative than those of shoe-black, lottery-ticket seller, or peanut vendor. A Portuguese will follow a pretty girl in the street, but his eye will be diverted by the newest shade in neckties dangling from the itinerant's portable stand, and there, he's forgotten all about that perky hat and the graceful silhouette. The privilege of staying a few days, a few weeks, in the only city in all Europe to have benefited by the war leaves one with a feeling of having dreamed of something that could not possibly exist—to anybody reaching it from central Europe it must appear like an oasis with a tree full of dates and a lake of clear water in the middle of a merciless desert. The Portuguese are fully conscious of their good fortune, but the fear of losing it overnight poisons their ability to enjoy it to the full. They are more frightened of a German invasion of Spain than are the Spaniards themselves.

I left Lisbon with the sun shining on it, and a slight breeze blowing in from the sea. My train was at three twenty-seven, but I arrived a little early, and it was only just backing in. The porter had very cleverly put my things right opposite the spot where the sleeping-car arrived. I cannot tell you how deeply moved I was by the sight of this familiar green car, with its silver lettering: 'Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits et des Grands Express Européens.' My heart gave a beat when the conductor in his chocolate uniform jumped out, and carefully put the two steps on the platform to help his passengers climb into the car. My emotion was

such that for a few moments I could hardly move, for this was the symbol of pre-war continental travel. It was the magic carpet that took one freely from city to city, and most of it brought one to and from Paris. I wondered if I had ever travelled in this particular car before. One very like it had so often carried me on the Sud Express, and I had a momentary glimpse of travelling through the Landes between Bordeaux and Dax in the broiling heat, which brought out the odour of resin with sickening pungency. Now Bordeaux was a Nazi submarine and seaplane base. . . . Paris . . . ? And then I saw myself leaving my little village station in Normandy one spring morning in 1940. The Germans had not yet attacked the Low Countries. My village looked lovely, and the station was nothing but a beautiful garden. But on all the sidings somebody had brought scores of sleeping-cars. They had come to rest there—beautiful shining things, redolent of luxurious journeys and white sheets, in which you could travel from my lovely Norman pasture lands to the deep blue of the Mediterranean. I suppose the French Government planned to keep those cars in my village for the duration of the war. What had happened to them?

Then to make my thought more poignant I became aware of a group of people standing beside me who were speaking French. There was a woman who was obviously a Parisian dressed in the simplicity which is the surest sign of good taste—a green dress, a big leather bag, and a large black straw hat. She was bidding farewell to an extremely elegant woman, accompanied by a tall, dark young man, who might well have been Italian, and just behind her were a man and a woman who, by their polite attention, appeared eager to stress the respect they owed her. I watched this scene for a few moments, and then followed my porter to the train, on which I read in large letters the words 'Lisboa-Madrid.'

Lisboa-Madrid. What romance in these two capitals when all Europe is at war, and they alone allow you to lift up a tiny corner of the curtain and obtain a glimpse of what is going on. As soon as my bags were safely in the compartment I went back on the platform to look more closely at our

train. It was not a very long one. Besides the sleeping-car there was a first- and second-class coach and a third-class coach. That was all, but what interested me most was that our locomotive was burning logs—small logs cut from the trunk in quarters with the axe. Of course they have been doing it in Scandinavia, but I could not help thinking of a forbear of mine who made the first journey through the Mediterranean in a steamboat which burned wood, and each time they ran short of fuel they stopped along the coast to hew themselves some more to continue the journey with. That was in 1838. Europe was going back over a century.

Lisbon railway station is not particularly impressive, but there is some local colour in a sherry bar that is typical of the country. The glass roof, through which the rays of the sun penetrate in shafts, becoming absorbed in the smoke from the trains, is built cathedral fashion. Small boys wheel newspaper trolleys along the quay singing out '*A Espera*' and '*Mundo Grafico*.' The porters are dressed as their colleagues in Paris used to be, in blue overalls with red belts. Like them they smell faintly of garlic.

I went back into the corridor of the car, and with my back to the compartment stood looking out of the window. The engine let out a shrill cry reminiscent of the big six-thousand-horse-power locomotives of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and we pulled out of the station to be plunged almost immediately into the long Rossio tunnel which, if it takes you by surprise, fills your carriage with smoke. Soon we came upon the Tagus, whose right bank we were to follow for so long. It flows very wide, and with a slow majesty reminiscent of the Loire, for it soon ceases to be navigable because of the little mud flats that stick out above the shallow water and make islands for the birds to rest on. Who ever said that Portugal was a barren country? From the marshy plains which give rich pasture to herds and horses we passed through the cork woods to the vineyards, dry and dusty, with mountains in the distance. And then all the riches of the earth seemed to be spread before our eyes, like a great exotic garden. A snow-

frightened by the passing of our train, spread out its huge wings and soared into the distance. A stork! I thought it might be a freak, a bird that might have tumbled here by mistake from its nest beside the chimney of a half-timbered house in Alsace, but here were another and yet another rising from the marshland. There was a little station we passed where the boughs of the trees were full of them. I saw more from this train than I ever saw in a week in Alsace.

I soon discovered that we were approaching the city of Abrantes, and this news filled me with excitement, for I had been reading the memoirs of the Duchess of Abrantes, wife of Napoleon's general, who captured the town in 1807. The train was slowing up at the station, and the Frenchman whom I had noticed standing so respectfully with his wife behind the lady in the big black hat put his head out of the window and remarked:

'You have no idea, madame, how wonderful the air smells here. It is quite unique.'

The lady in green, who was standing in the doorway of her compartment, answered with true feminine objectiveness:

'For my part I think all trains smell of smoke.'

I fancy the gentleman was vexed, for he moved away, and the lady in green remained alone.

She had become aware that I was a party to this comedy, for she gave me an understanding look, which allowed me to open up a conversation. Her Paris home was in the avenue Foch, the street of millionaires, but she had fled to Bordeaux before the arrival of the Germans, and later gone to stay with friends in Rio de Janeiro, where she had remained for nearly two years, but now the call of her native city had proved too much for her—it had obsessed her night and day, she said—and she was determined, whatever might happen, to see it again.

'So you are on your way to Paris now?'

'I hope so, but one never knows. As soon as I reached Lisbon I went to see the French consul, who stamped on my passport: "Good to return to France." It seems a mockery.

don't you think, for a Frenchwoman to have stamped on her passport: "Good to return to France"?"

'Yes, but the Germans are there.'

I fancy she must have read into this remark more than I actually meant to convey, for she went on: 'You blame me for returning, or at least for trying to return, while the Germans are still there, but I simply could not stand living in Rio any longer. The rich French refugees are all taking out Brazilian naturalization papers to safeguard their fortunes, and the German propaganda is so intensive that it ends by sapping one's spirit.'

'How did you return from Brazil?'

'I first intended to take a Brazilian ship, but I was warned by the Brazilians themselves that probably it would be torpedoed because they had just signed the pact with America. The ship was torpedoed. I therefore took a Spanish liner, filled with Germans returning to their own country—mostly diplomats. There were also many Italians, but the Germans were not on speaking terms with them. Our journey took no less than thirty-six days, and it was very painful for me because even the Spanish captain, by failing to pay me a single courtesy call, demonstrated his contempt for a Frenchwoman who, before the war, would have been welcomed with every mark of respect.'

We discussed fashions, and she told me that the woman who had come to say good-bye to her at the station was Mme Suzy, the modiste, who had just arrived in Lisbon from Paris with a new collection of hats which she was to take to Rio.

'What did she say about Paris?'

'She said that Parisians were praying for anybody to deliver them from the Germans; that her seamstresses were not so much short of food as developing the most atrocious stomach troubles from the starches they were eating.'

'Is it your impression that the Germans are less confident?'

'You should know better than I, for in Rio the Germans were living a very agreeable life a long way from their own country. They never spoke of the Russian campaign otherwise than to stress that it was a war against Communism, but

in Lisbon I found the Italians still very full of bravado. One of their attachés is going around telling this story. He met an English colleague the other day to whom he said: "You'll see the war will be over within six months with an Italian-German victory." The Englishman answered: "I will bet you five thousand pounds to five escudos that the war will be over in six months, but with a British victory." "At the end of six months," said the Italian, "the five escudos will be worth more than five thousand pounds."

. 'That Italian is also a long way from the war.'

She laughed, and returning to fashions we talked about the new coats and skirts and the new hats. 'Yes,' said my friend, taking up a copy of *Marie-Claire* from the table in her compartment. 'Those fashions are giving people in South America the idea that Paris is a gay place, but if one studies the advertisements it is clear how much misery there is in France—no soap, no fats, no pharmacy, and no clothes.'

It seemed very difficult for me to believe that I was standing beside a woman who was going back to Paris, for was it not the Forbidden City that I would not see again until the end of the war? Yet it was possible that she would be there in a week, or perhaps ten days. She would doubtless travel by way of Barcelona and Cerbère, and the first French town she would pass would be Perpignan. Perpignan. . . . That reminded me about my French friend whose address I had looked up at the Avenida Palace. I had seen his Portuguese agent the next day, who told me that he had just received a message saying that my friend had sent instructions for his Portuguese car to meet him at the Franco-Spanish border a few miles south of Cerbère, and that he would travel to Lisbon in it by way of Madrid. The only point was that I might have to leave Madrid before he arrived, but it did at least show that some people seemed to travel fairly easily between France and Portugal, and that these friends of mine had certainly not lost all their money, because I imagine that it is not a small undertaking to have one's Portuguese car fetch one at the other end of Spain!

The lady in green had invited me into her compartment.

and we sat surrounded by her lovely leather bags and cases, which had been made before the war by Hermès, the most famous leather-craftsman in Paris.

'Yes, I wonder,' she mused, talking more to herself than to me. 'Perhaps I shall find *them* living in my house!' I saw her give a tiny shudder, but she went on: 'What is so terrible is to have left everything so normal, so clean and tidy, and then to try and realize what it's like now. Do you really think I should have done better not to go back?'

Even though I had thought it I would not have said so now, because I knew that her mind was made up, and it was kinder to give her courage than to fill her with despair. Besides, who is to judge in such a case? The call of one's home is terribly strong—it can beckon one all through the night, especially if there are loved ones there.

There are times when one must not answer a question. The Irish turn the issue by asking another. I looked out of the window, where I could see lakes filled with water-lilies and olive-trees growing in orchards carpeted with buttercups, and here and there was a farm with some peasant wending her way homeward in a bright dress carrying a load on her head.

'I wonder if they are going to make a nuisance of themselves at the frontier?'

I wasn't expecting her to speak, and her voice gave me almost a shock, but this showed a much healthier state of mind. My companion was becoming feminine and practical again.

'There are all sorts of rumours,' I answered rather unkindly, although I myself was feeling nervous about the ordeal. The Portuguese custom-house is at Marvão-Beira. We had some time to go yet, and by piecing our information together we were able to place almost every person in the sleeping-car. People have all a very good reason to be on a train like this one. To begin with, there were ourselves. There was also the Portuguese diplomatic courier, who was extremely good-looking, with small moustaches, and the lovely dark eyes characteristic of his race. He spoke a little French, and was



extremely friendly, and the conductor was polite to him. There were two Spaniards who might have been business men, one British diplomat, and two corn-haired Germans, sitting on either side of the bag they were carrying from Lisbon to Madrid. They never left their compartment together.

These were the certainties. It struck us that any self-respecting film director could make a pretty good plot out of such a set of characters. Half an hour later we reached Marvão-Beira, and some officials came to collect our passports. It was the cool of the evening, just before dusk, and we got out on the platform for a change of air, where we learned that there was no inspection of luggage by the Portuguese. We were much relieved by this, although the Spanish ordeal had still to come. Our conductor came to say good-bye with an air of wanting a tip, and we discovered that his place would be taken by a Spaniard on the other side of the frontier. Our train had undergone a slight change since we left Lisbon. We had taken on a restaurant car, and this, together with the third-class coach, was about to leave us. Our locomotive was taking on more wood and water, and on the platform near the top luggage van we came upon a whole consignment of wooden cases, on which was stencilled: 'Britain delivers the goods.' They seemed to contain perfume for Madrid. The end of the platform was in open country, but it was very rocky, and with no wild flowers to speak of, and the only sign of life was in a collection of hen coops, where some small children were rounding up the birds. A few moments later we set off across a barren twenty-mile wilderness for the Spanish custom-house of Valencia de Alcántara.

How enormous can be the difference between two railway platforms when they are in different countries. Here we were in Spain! We knew that right away by the distinctive uniform of the Civil Guard—green serge, red epaulets, yellow belt, and that three-cornered hat of shiny black material that looks like oilcloth. The entire village seemed to have turned out to welcome us, and I suspect that in Valencia

de Alcántara it is the thing to do to come and look at the people in the Lisboa-Madrid express after one's evening cup of black dishwater that goes by the name of coffee. The young girls walked up and down the platform arm-in-arm, laughing loudly to make themselves noticed. They used a sickly perfume that hit one in the nostrils several moments before the owners passed, and remained with one with an insistence and a tenacity which might make one wish that good perfume did the same. There were dogs and children, some real old crones, even some babies in arms. Our new conductor hurried along the corridor, saying that all but the diplomats must put out their luggage and wait on the platform. The lady in green and I looked at each other with a puzzled expression that had the slightest tinge of fear. There was not a porter in sight. Of course neither of us was a diplomat; nor was the couple next door, who suddenly made an appearance after dining in the restaurant car. We put our heads out of the compartment, and noticed that nobody was taking the slightest notice of the conductor, who kept shouting out: 'Only diplomats remain in the car.'

Said the lady in green: 'After all, perhaps we are diplomats in a way.'

'Perhaps,' I answered. 'It's certainly worth trying.'

For the next quarter of an hour nothing happened, and we didn't dare move, and then a couple of Spanish officers arrived to ask us with the most exquisite courtesy if we had any money we should not have, or anything declarable in our bags. We explained that our consciences were perfectly clear on these two points, and that we held ourselves at the disposal of the officers in question to prove it, whereupon they looked round in a very dignified way and passed along. Now there are a lot of things, especially in Spain, that cannot be explained. I have no idea why we all got off so lightly, except perhaps that there really was an impressive array of bona-fide diplomats who covered the rest with their mantle. But we all breathed much more freely, and went to bed with contented minds.

It was nine o'clock the following morning when I was

wakened by the conductor knocking on the door with his little key and saying: 'Madrid in three-quarters of an hour.'

I dressed slowly, and went out into the corridor, where the Portuguese courier was looking out of the window. He gave me a smile that revealed his white teeth and pointed ahead of us, beyond Madrid, at the snow-capped mountains of Guadalama. The country we were going through was very flat and uninteresting. From time to time we would see a donkey, a mule, or a worn-out horse, blindfolded and pacing round and round, drawing water from a well. But suddenly I became interested in this dull country because I noticed that, although there were very few buildings, any that one did see were invariably new. From this I made another discovery, that every now and again one could see a single wall of a burned-out church, or some other relic to show that the entire country-side had been laid waste. We were seeing the first effects of the civil war.

This battle-field was poor and arid and dusty and sad. Nobody could conceivably wish to live on it or to till its soil. The conductor came along crying out: 'Madrid in five minutes.' The two Germans, who had doubtless slept across their diplomatic bag, came out, their faces as white and as lifeless as the country-side. The two Spaniards further along were talking rather more animatedly. They had doubtless brought a few presents from Lisbon for their wives. As we neared the city we could see entire blocks of houses gutted by fire or laid low by shells. We were soon passing through a cemetery of uninhabited homes. The lady in green was standing just beside me, and I saw her open her bag and take out a handkerchief with which she wiped a tear from her cheek. I knew that she was wondering how she would find Paris, and how many of her relations and friends would still be alive. I looked quickly away, not to intrude upon her thoughts, though I saw that she knew that we were thinking the same thing.

But now we were running into Madrid West (Delicias). Our journey was ended.





*The Picture Gallery of the Prado*



ALL stations are dirty, but this one gave me the impression of desolation. The courtyard was dusty and depressing, and it was by the merest chance that I was able to obtain a taxi to take me, with my luggage to the Palace Hotel, where it had been arranged that I should stay, for taxis in Madrid are almost non-existent. We drove quickly along the Paseo de las Delicias, and in this rather remote quarter of Madrid the effects of the civil war are shown by a general air of poverty rather than by anything physical, though there are traces of damage by projectiles, both on the walls of the buildings and on the pavements. There are shops, but one has the impression that they have nothing much to sell. It is not the best approach to the Prado, which remains one of the most glorious thoroughfares that any great city can boast of.

The Palace is one of those monster hotels where an endless stream of people file in and out of the entrance; where the head porter and his staff juggle with keys, and answer questions in any language under the sun; where there are bookstalls and shoe-shine parlours, hairdressing establishments, and rows of window displays where you may buy anything from lingerie to Spanish shawls by inquiring for the attendant; where two lifts never cease going up and down, and where the public rooms have plush-covered arm-chairs in not very good taste, and lofty ceilings, and where the corridors are so long that you get tired before reaching your room.

I was given a very pleasant apartment with good mirrors, a table I could really write on, and an excellent bathroom. And, most important of all, I was terribly excited to be in Madrid, feeling that I had thus penetrated deeper into Europe, and was nearer to the boiling cauldron.

Madrid! The heat was terrific. The sun was so strong that not only did it burn one's skin, but its rays penetrated one's clothes. Madrid claims to be the most elevated capital in Europe. Its pavements are like molten lead scorching the feet.

It was one o'clock, and leaving my hotel I turned left into the Prado, which avenue, as wide as the Champs-Élysées, has cool gardens down the centre, with fountains and carefully tended paths where nurses and children sit on stone benches under the shadow of acacias and magnolia-trees. Across the wide and dusty Canovas de Castillo, exactly opposite the Palace Hotel, the church of San Jerónimo el Real towers from higher ground, above the Ritz and the famous picture gallery. In any other city one might be thinking of lunch at one o'clock, but the people of Madrid, though now prevented by law from frequenting their cafés and restaurants most of the night, insist on not lunching before 2 p.m. As I expected, therefore, the nurses and their small charges were still in the Prado. It is what Kensington Gardens used to be in Barrie's day; it is what the Champs-Élysées used to be between the Place de la Concorde and the Rond-Point, when old ladies used to sell sticky sweets for two sous, and when there was a Punch and Judy show. The feature of the Prado is the low stone benches, each occupied by a nurse and her small charges, while the pram lies alongside like a liner at the quay. What I like also is the way in which Spanish mothers come to join the nurse and family. The mother is dressed fashionably, for she may have to lunch in some smart restaurant. Most of the nurses are dressed all in white, with either a veil or a straw hat turned up in front, and their white accoutrements make a striking contrast with their jet-black hair, for most of them are young, and follow the advice of Ovid, who sang: 'White suits dark women; it adds to your charms, O Andromede!' Nevertheless the Spanish woman must have her touch of red, and she paints her lips with carmine, just as her mistress does. She also stresses the beauty of her lashes with eyeblack. An old man, armed with a birch broom, and followed by another armed with two pieces of board, brushes the fallen leaves in a cloud of dust, so that his companion, behind, collects more dust than leaves. The acacias have been watered at the base of the trunk, and those little puddles are the only signs of humidity in a parched soil. On each side of the wide avenue is the shadow of the

tall white houses, tramways clang their way, and they are so full, and other transport so rare, that young men cling to the outsides at the peril of their lives. Spanish flags hang from every house-top, and out of every window, where they are laid across the sills or balconies; and here and there one sees an aggressive swastika. Although this section of the Prado is almost exclusively babyland, an occasional passer-by appears to enjoy the scene. Here comes a man, still young, but with drawn features, hopping along on crutches, and I wager he is a victim of the civil war. Two officers catch up with him, and pass by with swaggering gait, and one of them is wearing the Iron Cross on his Spanish uniform, proving that he fought on the Eastern Front in the Blue Legion. The children round me are well dressed—the little girls in pink smocks, and the boys in open white shirts and linen shorts. Some of the little boys wear chains of fine gold round their necks, and these gleam in the sun. A few yards away from where I sat a wooden horse was having its sparse tail pulled by a little girl in a pink silk dress, who sprang to her feet with an aggrieved yell when a ball landed in a puddle at the foot of a tree, and sprayed her with drops of muddy water. Most of the prams resembled the one I brought back from my farm, and which so startled Londoners during the Battle of London—low on its rubber wheels, and entirely constructed of shining stainless steel, so light that you could put it under your arm. I was surprised not to see more of those wizened women dressed in black from head to feet, whom one sees so often in other parts of the city, and it was refreshing to notice so much youth. A little boy with wan features and wearing spectacles ran in my direction with a toy rifle under his arm. A very smart nurse, accompanied by a small boy in blue and a girl in a gingham dress, came along and sat down on an empty bench. All three were blond like the teddy bear the nurse was carrying under an arm. The nurse and the girl took out some sewing, while the boy slipped away from the bench, and came over to join the pale lad with the rifle, who started to show off while the newcomer looked at him with big eyes full of childish admiration, and after a few moments.



with great daring, he put out a finger to touch the implement. As he did so his nurse looked up from her sewing and uttering an angry cry came over to her charge, dragging him away as she said: 'I'll give you a beating if you can't stop playing with those guns. Isn't it enough that your poor father was killed in the war?' Through the trees I could see the fountain playing in the centre of the pond, on the edge of which sat a little girl sewing a cotton dress for her doll, which lay naked beside her. The public photographer, seated on the edge of a stone bench, was bending over a folding stool, which he had turned into a table. His camera was almost hidden by examples of his work, nearly all of which were child studies. Just then he was busy colouring a picture he had developed a few moments earlier, and at his side lay a box of water-colours. A colleague, with a beret pulled over one eye and the butt of a cigarette in his mouth, was watching him with admiration. There are no donkeys, nor even a Punch and Judy show, but the second-hand stamp dealer opened up his book on a bench while children clustered round him, leaving him all alone a moment later at the approach of the ice-cream boy carrying his cylindrical red ice-box over his shoulders. Further along, between the trees, some workmen had left a winch over what must have been a well, but now the ground was filled up, and a little girl was standing up beside it with her back turned to half a dozen children who were sprinting towards her. Each time she looked round the competitors had to stop in the positions she caught them in, but when she turned her head they could start again. Jealous of her power she turned her head frequently, and the boys were not allowed to cheat. In the flower kiosk an old lady was selling corn-flowers and roses.

It was half-past one, and many nurses were beginning to take their charges home. The only cars one ever sees in Madrid were beginning to drive up to the Ritz, because this was cocktail time. I crossed the Prado and entered the hotel. The big white foyer leads through glass doors to the cool dining-room overlooking the garden, where dancing takes place at night. The foyer has a glass-roof top, through which

the sun shines without glare or burn. The carpets are so thick that one's heels penetrate deeply into their richness, and there are so many flowers on every side that one has the impression of being in a conservatory. Two beautiful tapestries hang on either side of the marble pillars leading out to the Calle Felipe IV, and these Aubussons make a glorious background for three superb brunettes in printed dresses with straw hats and veils. Hats of straw in every shape and form! What a pleasing fashion! White straw, little boaters, wide-brimmed hats of the same colour as a field of wheat on an August day, and decorated with cornflowers and velvet round the crown as red as poppies. Everywhere the new coat and skirt—the jacket tight-waisted, long, and clinging to the hips; the skirt short and narrow. Cocktail time is from one-thirty to two-fifteen. What men there are act as a background to the women, who make of this a fashion parade. It is strange to see so much wealth in the centre of a city that is near to starvation. There is no doubt that in this elegant room, with its little Louis XV gilt clocks and its chandeliers, there are to be found the only survivors of Europe's madonnas of the sleeping-car.

If Lisbon has a natural gaiety that is not to be found in Madrid, I believe there is nothing in Lisbon or, for that matter, anywhere else on the Continent, to compare with the brilliance of the Ritz at night. Towards ten o'clock beautiful women, wearing the most sumptuous dresses, and perfumed with the rarest scents of Chanel or of Guerlain, sip cocktails in the foyer before dining in the garden under a roof of green leaves and roses. There is a tiny cocktail bar, all done up in white, that is adjacent to the foyer, where rich dresses of satin, faille, moire, and silk rustle over the parquet floor. You will also see the loveliest prints of every colour. Both blondes and brunettes wear their hair long and untrammelled in the neck. There are capes of silver fox and wraps of sable, and though the dresses are long and touch the floor you will catch a glimpse from time to time of painted toe nails peeping out of golden sandals. Most of the men favour white or cream dinner-jackets, with a red carnation in the buttonhole, and

they wear little chains on the wrist and massive signet rings. People dine either in private rooms with carpets of roses on the table, or in the dining-room where the doors and windows are wide open, or on the terrace, or in the garden where tables are laid all round the dance floor and amongst the trees that will be illuminated as soon as it is dusk. There are wicker chairs under sweet-smelling syringa, where you may sit and order coffee if you have dined elsewhere. By that time the gardens will be ablaze with light, and the orchestra will be playing a tango with the rhythm of the south, and the dance floor will be rustling with silk and a riot of beauty and colour. You will hear Spanish and Portuguese, German and Italian, French and English, both native and with the American twang, for all nationalities meet on this neutral soil. The first time I walked in and sat on the edge of the dance floor I ordered coffee and a packet of cigarettes, but it is sheer madness to ask for cigarettes in Madrid, for they simply do not exist except in the blackest of black markets. The waiter said he was sorry, but that it was impossible to bring me cigarettes. Then he bent down confidentially and whispered: 'I might perhaps find you a packet of Camels at twenty-five pesetas.' This works out at eleven shillings if you reckon forty-two pesetas to the pound. A few moments later I saw him return with two plates clamped together face to face. He opened them out with a speed of a conjuror, and the cigarettes were on the table-cloth. He had disappeared before I could say a word, but a *maître d'hôtel* was watching from a distance, and as soon as I had lighted a cigarette he arrived bowing, and I guessed he had come to collect the cash. He obviously thought that I was crazy, but I might, for all he knew, be waiting for a multimillionaire, so he humoured me by putting an extra piece of sugar in my coffee, which was made of oak leaves. The waiters kept the extra sugar locked up in the petty cash box for safety, so you may judge what sort of a favour he was doing me. The rumbas and the tangos followed one another, and the air was filled with perfume—the perfume of the acacias, of the jasmine, and the roses in the garden, and that of the

great Paris fashion houses worn not only by the women, but also by the men on the dance floor. I looked around me wondering whether I was dreaming—whether there really was a war holding down the entire world in its grip. This was Paris before 1939, this was Cannes in the good days of peace. Perhaps Rio is like this still. A millionaire sherry farmer was dancing with a tall blonde. The blonde was not his wife, who was in hospital with a bullet through an eye. The planter was a friend of those ‘gentlemen’ from the German embassy. There was a mistake the other evening. A certain young woman was to be ‘taken for a ride,’ and the planter’s wife was kidnapped by error, so she wasn’t able to dance, but the German embassy will pay compensation.

I LOVE looking at shop windows. They are the first things that I inspect on renewing acquaintance with a city, for it is my belief that they reflect the soul of a nation. The Prado is for the children, and for those people who are obliged to travel by tram-car from one end of the city to the other, but I warn you to keep a good grip on your handbag if you use this method of transport, for while you are looking out of the window your bag will be opened just as efficiently as my trunks were ransacked each time I left the hotel. Luckily I was warned about this, and it came as no surprise to me to find a pair of shoes where I was certain I had put a clothes brush, and I felt somewhat ashamed of my lack of incriminating documents with which to regale the Gestapo.

The best shops are to be found in the streets and avenues that radiate from the Puerta del Sol. Many people who visit Madrid for the first time expect to find a family resemblance between the Puerta del Sol and the Arc de Triomphe, but there has been no gate there for many centuries, and it has much more in common with Piccadilly Circus without Eros and the flower girls. If you are disappointed with the Puerta del Sol remember that many visitors have the same impression of Piccadilly Circus—until they get to know it better.

Madrid would not give one any great idea of poverty if one were to judge solely by the crowds in the street, for the Spanish girl retains her beauty and the Spaniard his light heart. The shops are gay and colourful from a distance. It is only when you start peering through the windows that you notice how much is lacking. The absence of cigarettes did not worry me very much, and the packet of Camels I bought at the Ritz kept my friends going quite a time, but it is curious to reflect that Madrid is a city where the tobacconist has ceased to earn a living. His shop has disappeared altogether.

There are masses of stockings, and in view of the fact that the price of living in Madrid is at least three times that of any

other place I know, I suppose they are not very expensive, but the artificial silk of which they are made is so poor that they hardly last a week. There is still some leather work in the very expensive shops, and a few well-made bags, which is not surprising, for the Spaniards are as famous for this as the Italians, but the shoes are poor and clumsy, and it is lucky for the Spanish woman that she has so small a foot that she always looks well shod. Materials are inferior, and one is seldom tempted by a blouse or a dress that look provincial, though they appear to cost as much as a model from Molyneux; but I admit that it is almost impossible to know what the peseta really is worth, for it is a matter for negotiation in the black market. Many things one takes for granted elsewhere are not to be found, and the shop-girl is liable to answer: 'We are waiting for a shipment. Call in again next month.'

To compensate for all this there are plenty of perfumes and cosmetics—not, of course, that stupendous choice of pre-war French stocks that exists in Lisbon, but enormous quantities of Spanish makes and a few French ones like Bourjois, produced at Barcelona under licence. One shop out of every four seemed to me to be dedicated to the art of make-up, and all these beautiful bottles, and the perfumes which emanate from them, flatter the eye and the sense of smell.

There's no doubt that if one has to dress less well a lipstick and perfume make all the difference. They give one the same assurance as a new hat.

Those unbelievable displays of cakes and pastries, of fruit and chocolate, that gave such an air of wealth to Lisbon, are not to be found in Madrid. There is nothing to excite your greed, and very little to satisfy your hunger. Strawberries that look very tired after a long journey from heaven knows where cost a fortune, and even the girl in the shop looks apologetic when she offers them to you. Bananas are rare and expensive, and even oranges are not thrust upon you as they are in Portugal. Bread is practically unobtainable, and is rationed to a piece as big as your thumb for breakfast in the morning, and personally I preferred to save a doctor's bill by not eating it. The bread ration is based on the money

you earn, and in this way poor people get a larger ration than the wealthy. This law, though excellent in theory, helps the black-market man, who buys the poor man's ration to sell it to the rich. Butter only exists once a week in the black market, and cheese and milk are hard to come by. Food is a nightmare for the well-to-do housewife. The poor must be content to starve. That is the shadow that hangs over Spain.

I miss those kiosks filled with newspapers and magazines that so delighted me in Lisbon. Though the French newspapers reach Madrid rather quicker one does not see them strung up, and there is not that international rivalry of the printed word. If you are shop window gazing you must be careful to make no sudden decision to cross the road, for jay walkers are fined on the spot. You are only allowed to cross at certain places under the eye of a policeman, who blows his whistle to shepherd his flock across. Nevertheless the Spaniard still loves to stroll along the pavement, and drop in at his favourite café, where he meets the same friends each day. Some of these cafés are quite palatial, with comfortable arm-chairs on the sidewalk, and there are places where you may take afternoon tea and watch the passing pageant of the Avenida José Antonio, at the top of which there are some fine modern cinemas where the latest Spanish films are shown.

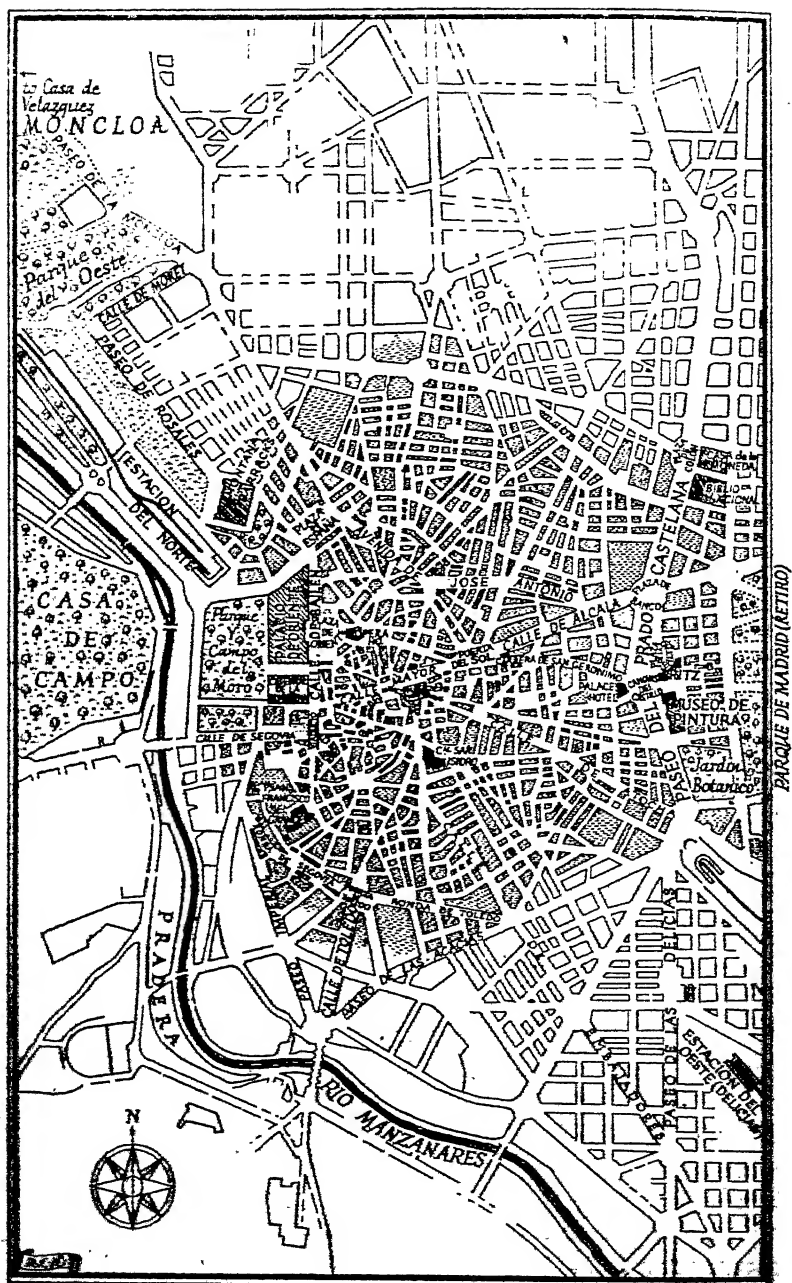
There is this other thing which strengthens the comparison between the Puerta del Sol and Piccadilly Circus. There are buildings on some of the avenues that radiate from the heart of Madrid that have been destroyed by bombs. It gives one a homely feeling. For instance, supposing you were approaching the Puerta del Sol along the Calle de Alcalá, you would see a large building on your right, of which only the façade remains. We in London clear up our bomb damage completely. In Madrid if there is any chance of leaving the façade, though it only remains standing by a miracle, this system is preferred. There is something supernatural about these lone walls that might come toppling down at any moment, but they remain mute witnesses of the horrors of a civil war.

The Puerta del Sol is lit up at night, but there is no blaze of

sky-line publicity. The nocturnal activity is also much less than in the old days when the people in Madrid never went to bed until dawn. The present Government is not for allowing its citizens to keep late hours, and there are all sorts of laws about not dining after a certain hour, and not allowing more than a dozen people to congregate—even in a private house. This change of living is more radical than most of us can realize. A Spanish friend told me that in the days of the king she remonstrated with her husband for allowing their son to be out so late at nights. After several days her husband plucked up courage and said to the young man at dinner: 'My son, you really must have more regard for your mother. I must insist that from now on you should be home by three o'clock each morning.'

It is quite extraordinary how noisy the Puerta del Sol can be considering that there are hardly any more motor cars left in Madrid! But the few cars that are on the streets, together with the tramways, beat everything they've got on board to make a jazz king's symphony. From the Puerta del Sol we can pass rapidly into one of the few old quarters of Madrid—the Plaza Mayor, a rather sad but lovely old square, where Charles the First of England was entertained to a bullfight when visiting the King of Spain, whose daughter he had thought of marrying. From this sombre square one may penetrate into narrow, cobbled, medieval streets by steep steps, and there are mysterious little wineshops and restaurants where each room is on a different level because of the sloping ground. One evening when I had dined in such a place a friend took me back to the Puerta del Sol by a series of narrow streets in one of which was a grim-looking building guarded by those security police who look so much like Nazi soldiers. A Spanish flag hung over the entrance, on which were painted the words: 'Todo por la Patria,' and by the dim light of the entrance hall one could see the iron bars of the cells. Half a dozen police motor coaches stood outside. Spaniards avoid this street if they can pass any other way. It has a sinister name, and the word Patria is a misnomer, for the place is run by the Gestapo.





I WAS sure that somewhere in Madrid I would discover the unhealed scars of the civil war which has so greatly sapped the lifeblood of the nation. I admit that I was not well versed in the details, though certain names stuck in my memory, such as the Casa de Campo and the University City, so I went into a bookshop in the Puerta del Sol and for five pesetas bought myself a map of the city, by which I could guide my steps. Having studied this I discovered that it should not be very difficult to walk as far as the Palacio de Oriente, which was none other than the royal palace of Alfonso's day, and in a quarter of an hour I was standing in the Plaza de Oriente, where the opera house faces the left wing of the palace.

It is not very easy, even for a Spaniard, to distinguish in this square what is due to the civil war, and what is the result of present-day alterations, for it looked, for all the world, as if a bomb had suddenly been dropped in the centre. Paving stones were littered all over the place, and there were statues without heads or arms. In fact, these statues had been rescued from the palace after its lengthy shelling, and are to be replaced when mended, but the buildings all round were terribly mutilated. The opera house itself has never been finished, and has never known a first night. Crossing the square I reached the Calle Bailen, which, being on high ground, commands a fine view over the Parque y Campo del Moro, the palace gardens which King Alfonso overlooked from his bedroom window. Away to my right, beyond the last houses of the city, stretched open country, and I suddenly realized that I was looking upon the bloodiest battle-field of the civil war.

It was quite clear that I needed a guide and a motor car, for if I was to see anything I still had a long way to go, and I was turning this problem over in my mind when I reached the Plaza de España, where the first thing I saw was a taxi-cab cruising slowly towards me. Now the sight of a taxi-cab in

Madrid is so rare that I could hardly believe my good luck. I made frantic signs at the driver, who pulled up beside me, his face wreathed in smiles.

We studied the map together, and he said he would drive very slowly and explain everything as we went along, but first could I see that huge building completely gutted just beyond the square? That was the Montaña Barracks, where there had been so much loss of life. We would go there now, and follow the barracks round into the Paseo de Rosales, at the end of which there was a terrace from which we could see everything.

The Montaña was indeed a ghastly sight, but for modern habitations laid waste I have seldom seen anything so frightfully forlorn as now met our gaze. This Paseo de Rosales was a rather pleasant wide avenue, bordered on the right by what must have been quite delightful flats, and on the left by a park leading down into a valley where one could see the Manzanares River and the railway line. Shells had gutted the flats, and left a cemetery of skeletons. We drove to the end of the avenue, which now turned sharply to the right, forming a terrace overlooking the Parque del Oeste and Moncloa, on which the University City was built. I stopped the car where the avenue forms a right angle. There are chairs and tables in this corner, where you can order something cool to drink and study the view that extends as far as the snow-capped mountains of Guadalupe.

From here we had an arm-chair view of where the battle for Madrid was fought. If we looked behind us we could see the king's palace and his gardens, the Casa de Campo, and the river and the railway line running parallel in the valley. If we looked in front of us towards the mountains we could see little mounds on which stood the shells of the various university buildings, such as the agricultural engineering college, the national institute of hygiene, the hospital, and the Casa de Velázquez, which was put up by the French Government as a cultural centre. These buildings had been shelled so badly that one wondered how they could still stand. One felt a pang of pity for their poor white carcasses.

A wide dusty road ran through the valley. For long months this road was no man's land. The Republicans defended Madrid from where we stood. Franco's men were on the other side of the road. Many of the landmarks, like the hospital standing on one of the highest mounds, were taken and re-taken many times by the opposing forces. The Casa de Velázquez, lower down, looked as if it had received a tremendous punch in the nose by a giant which had made it double up in the most agonizing pain. There was something almost human about it. Immediately below us was the Parque del Oeste, now planted with tiny trees because all its majestic ones had been razed to the ground. This unfortunate park looked like a man whose hair had been close cropped. The grass was uneven, and full of shrubs and tufts. All that was beautiful had been blasted away.

I asked our driver to take us along this wide arterial road, leading down into the valley, so that we could follow what had been the front line. He drove us along the terrace before we climbed down in the arterial road, and here again the buildings all round us had been utterly wrecked. Soon we left the last houses in Madrid and entered the splendid park in which this university city was being planned at the outbreak of the civil war.

What a splendid idea to build a university in these silvan surroundings! There were still a number of big trees left, giving some idea of the original beauty of this hilly country. And here, on our right, was a gateway, leading through a beautifully designed garden to the ruins of a splendid white pavilion glistening in the sun. On the gateway were engraved the following words: 'CIUDAD UNIVERSITARIA—Pabellón de Gobierno y Oficinas.' How supremely pathetic now sounded this proud announcement. University City! What is left of you now? And what has happened to that governor whose heart must have swelled with pride, whose head must have been full of lofty dreams, the first day he walked through that splendid gate to his new home, out of which he would so quickly be driven?

I felt as if I was visiting the ruins of an ancient Roman city.

The ground is very hilly, and the grass is full of poppies, and I picked one of them and put it carefully away as we used to pick Flanders poppies after the last war. My driver continued along this splendid artery, built for two lines of traffic, and divided down the centre by low shrubs and bushes. We stopped again opposite the Casa de Velázquez, which is on the other side of the road. There was no car in sight, and I crossed over.

It seems to me that mutilation by shell is even more poignant than by a bomb from the air. Shells tear the guts out of a building in a horribly vicious way. There must have been a fine equestrian statue in bronze opposite the main entrance, for there remains the trunk of a horse leaning over a pedestal. There was no sign of the horse's head or tail any more than of the rider who probably bestrode it. Weeds grow in the courtyard where once there must have been carefully tended plants, and the magnificent wrought-iron railings are all twisted and torn and only half the gate is left. I was going to walk over to the other side when something about this gate struck me, but it took me some moments to decipher what I was looking for. Nevertheless I was right. The letters 'R.F.' were most beautifully entwined. What a terrible symbol of disaster for this unhappy Third Republic—beaten and hurled to the ground. Only that morning I had heard that the Gestapo had rounded up French citizens in Madrid, and that there was no longer an ambassador to protect them.

I turned my back to the Casa de Velázquez with a heavy heart. Somebody had painted a notice on a board: 'Se Prohibe el Paso.' I wonder who on earth would ever want to pass. We started off again, but only for a few yards. The country-side smelt good in spite of its wounds, and there was even a field of wheat, while up on a hill cows were grazing under the pine-trees. The call of the country was too strong for me, and I told the driver I was going to walk. The cows had bells round their necks as in Switzerland, and the grass was alive with crickets. Suddenly I noticed that I was on the edge of an old trench. It was extremely deep—deep



### *University City, Madrid*

*'The buildings had been shelled so badly that one wondered how they could still stand.'*





than the height of a man, and solidly made, though nature had now covered the sides with grass and poppies. The ground was now sloping downwards, and my driver, who was obediently following behind, was allowing his car to run along with the engine cut off, for which I was grateful, for I suddenly came across a truly Attic scene. A shepherd, whittling a piece of wood with a jackknife, was watching his sheep, amongst which was a kid no larger than a toy. I went over to talk to the shepherd, and found him leaning up against a wall full of holes, through which the Nationalists had fired at the Republicans across the road. The big arterial road was still deserted, except for our own car and a wizened old man slowly descending it on the back of a donkey. Fifty yards from where I stood it forked, one arm going to Coruña and the other to El Pardo. A smaller road led back to Madrid along the river bank, following the valley I had seen from the Paseo de Rosales. My chauffeur told me that this would lead us back to the front entrance of the royal palace, and I decided to take it. There must have been many happy excursions along this road before the civil war, for one sees such notices as: 'Fine Bathing Here,' and 'Open Air Restaurant—Wedding Receptions a Speciality,' but only the notices are left. The bathing establishment had long since fallen into the river, and weary soldiers must have drunk the last bottle of wine reserved for the newly-weds.

The state entrance of the palace was by the Plaza de la Armería, a rather narrow space which abuts on the royal gardens, and which divides the great iron gates of the palace from the cathedral of Almudens. The cathedral looked as if it had just been bombed. This appearance is less due to any damage it may have suffered during the civil war than to the fact that it is still in the course of construction.

The gates and railings of the palace are as heavy as those of Buckingham Palace, but the courtyard is deeper. Everything is deserted now, and there is a stillness that is hardly natural—a stillness of contempt and death. The Campo de Moro has survived the civil war, and its aged trees spread their branches heavy with leaves upon which Alfonso XIII



must so often have looked. I am a little puzzled about the cathedral of Almudens. Many pillars are standing, others lie flat. Just as the opera house has never had a first night, so this cathedral has never celebrated a mass except, I believe, in the crypt. I imagine that it must have suffered to some extent from the salvos of the Nationalists. The trouble with the Spaniards is that they never write their own history, and they object to others doing it for them!

IT was Sunday morning, and the sun was already hot. I was anxious to attend mass at the church of San Jerónimo el Real, behind the Ritz, where it dominates the picture gallery of the Prado. It was in this marvellous church that Alfonso XIII was married, and on this particular Sunday in June there was a special celebration in honour of a Spanish artillery regiment. The arms of Spain worked in freshly cut flowers were hanging above the door, and on entering the ante-chapel I found the floor entirely hidden under a carpet of flowers, while the walls were decorated with the most beautiful tapestries lent by the State, at the feet of which had been placed evergreens. In the distance I could see the altar decorated with masses of wild carnations, which made a background for the tapering candles flickering in the semi-obscurity and for the heavy ornaments of solid gold in which blood-red rubies burned. To the left, between the altar and the pulpit, was a baldaquin lined to resemble ermine, with a golden crown above it, and underneath were thousands of flowers and hundreds of candles. The pulpit was covered with a cloth of gold, offered to the church by Philip II before the Armada. This royal chapel smelt of incense and freshly cut flowers. It was crowded, but there was no crush, and I was even able to move with care to a seat nearer the altar, where I found myself beside a typical Madrid family. The father, small, with a sallow complexion, and those heavy eyelids that in certain Spaniards give the impression of bulging round the eyeballs, stood beside his wife, who was in black with a mantilla. I was surprised and delighted to see so many women wearing the mantilla. Sometimes these ethereal things of black Chantilly lace give the most surprising effects. Thus one sees them worn with long red coats pinched at the waist, and one realizes how profoundly the Spanish woman loves the contrast of red with black.

After mass I left the church by a little chapel dedicated to

Our Lady of Valencia, pausing a moment to admire the exquisite statue crowned with human hair, and I found myself in the cloisters shaded by acacia-trees. Mothers had brought their little girls dressed in white with white veils for their first communion, and it was the loveliest picture in the world. I went out into the street, passing once more by the front entrance to the church to admire again the floral arms. What a superb piece of work! Only one thing was missing—the motto of the kings of Spain, and I wondered if I should ever see it there again: ‘Plus Ultra.’

BETWEEN the Plaza de Banco and the Plaza de Colón is that superb wide avenue still called the Castellana, though various Governments have tried to change its name. The Castellana is simply a continuation of the Prado, and is laid out in exactly the same way—that is to say, with several lines of traffic and gardens in the middle. And in these gardens there are open-air cafés, where the seats are much in demand after mass on Sunday morning. The most famous of these cafés is called the Gijón, and from a table facing the path, shaded by acacias, along which Spanish people saunter at this hour, I was able to watch the smartest parade I have seen in many years. I must admit that the Paris boulevards had for some time before the war lost their charm for the stroller. People had gone to the Champs-Élysées in a vain effort to recapture the spirit of the boulevardier, but this gentle relic of the Second Empire had been poisoned by the fumes of motor cars. The Castellana is different. The women are lovely, and, in contrast with Lisbon, there are more women than men, while, there being no more cars owing to the shortage of petrol, old gentlemen, in alpaca coats with a rose in the buttonhole, drive along in cabriolets, their whips poised at just the right angle. I cannot tell you how delicious it is to dream that you have been wafted back into the past. I was quite astounded by the smartness of the women, but I was left wondering where they bought these lovely things one never sees in the shops. Here was a little blue boater decorated with white tulle, and there a dress of brick-red, worn with a black mantilla. This contrast of red and black is extraordinary, especially when it is complemented by scarlet lips and black lashes. I am beginning to consider this outrageous make-up not only charming, but quite normal, and I think that the burning sunshine has something to do with it. It is also the fashion here to wear finger nails as long as

a good heavy layer of crimson varnish, which suggests to me that the Spanish woman has no difficulty in getting servants. Such things are more difficult when one has to do the washing up. In and out between the passers-by dart, like fishes, the little vendors of fried potatoes. Old women with furrowed foreheads sell cornflowers, and young men with ice-box cylinders strung over their shoulders offer you cool strawberry and vanilla ices. There are dogs of every kind, the more valuable ones on a lead, and what charms me most is that young mothers do not leave their children behind as we would, but bring nurse and baby, or even wheel the pram themselves; but when nanny comes along she is dressed in white, and her lips are scarlet and her cheeks rouged. I watched a young woman pass me wearing a white coat and a black hat. 'You might think that this would have prevented her from wearing anything red?' But not a bit of it. Her hat had a veil the colour of poppies. The best thing about these straw hats is the way they can be made to look ethereal, with muslin or tulle or veils, and how summery they can look when covered with flowers!

The men do not smoke at all, and you never see a cigarette. There are no more motor cars, but gentlemen invite young women to ride in an open carriage. What a paradise on earth!

I had ordered a vermouth, and the waiter asked me if I would like some toasted nuts. I accepted, not to disappoint him, and as I started idly to put a few in my mouth some of them fell on the ground. Swift as an arrow, from somewhere in the centre of the crowd, a little urchin fell on those nuts, and was away like the wind. Then when some distance from me he turned, and I saw him looking back with large hungry eyes at the small plate by my glass, on which the remaining nuts reposed. I guessed that he coveted them, and I nodded in assent. He returned, and a small brown hand was shot out like the tongue of a serpent, and my nuts had gone. The crowd passed on, and here was a young woman with a spray of white syringa in her dark hair. The blooms were more potent than any scent, and how lovely to look upon! Nine men out of ten were hatless. A blind man

IT would be unthinkable to pass the shortest time in Madrid without paying one's respects to the picture gallery of the Prado. It is a miracle that it survived the civil war. I agree with those people who claim that the best way of learning about pictures is to go and see one or two at a time. There is nothing worse than a surfeit of good things. I therefore decided to have another look at the portraits of Philip II, because I had been thinking about this sad monarch since I had seen his cloth of gold in the church of San Jerónimo el Real. I discovered him as a young man painted by Titian, and in maturity by that excellent artist, Sanchez Coello. It is above all this last picture I admire, and in front of which I spent a long time, fascinated by the sombre king's blue eyes and fine beard falling on his lace collar. The lace is so admirably painted that one can almost see the stitches.

I heard a number of French people praising the Prado because they claimed that it was better arranged than the Louvre, where there are too many masterpieces. I could have told them that the Louvre had just sent to the Prado a number of Spanish masters, because the Spanish Government claimed that they had been stolen by the French in Napoleonic times. This argument seems a dangerous one, but as the Nazis were in favour of the scheme the French made no objection.

I was invited to attend a bullfight, and I could hardly refuse, though I admit that this sport is abhorrent to me. The bullring is on the eastern outskirts of the city, in what is known as modern Madrid—Madrid Moderno—and the best way to go there is by underground from the Plaza Banco, which is opposite the post office at the end of the Prado. The underground stations rendered the same service to the people of Madrid during the civil war as ours did to the people of London during the night raids. Their underground

is much shallower than ours, and there are only a few steps down to the tracks. We were not, of course, the only people to have the idea of using the tube to take us to the bullfight, and the only advantage that the train has over the tram is that people do not cling to the outside. On the other hand, I'm still wondering how we managed to squeeze in, for there did not appear to be an inch of space.

The ring is five stations away at Est Ventas. It is a huge circular building, only twelve years old, that stands on downland, and in the distance one can see the last white houses of the city on higher ground, strangely reminiscent of the outskirts of Athens.

Armed with cushions because the stadium is built of stone we clambered to our seats on the shady side of the ring. Every seat was taken, but it was mostly a male crowd, although there was a woman in front of me, and she had brought her baby! I had half expected to find women in embroidered shawls and white mantillas, just as I was prepared to be dazzled by a riot of colour as soon as the bull was brought in, for do not the picadors ride on beautiful horses, and are not the peones and the banderilleros dressed in the most gorgeous clothes? I was sadly disappointed, and it seemed to me as if the whole business was a rather Don-Quixotic affair, for the gold on the jackets of the peones was hopelessly tarnished and the picadors arrived on half-starved old nags, that seemed more dead than alive. What is more, the unfortunate bull seemed quite indifferent even after he had been gashed by the picadors, and pricked with the banderillas. I looked in vain for the lovely lady with the gold and scarlet cloak laid out in front of her, who would throw the red roses at the matador after the *coup de grâce*. But I did see a matador hissed, and the dead bull cheered, because he had been braver, and I also saw a matador receive a royal reception for a spectacular duel during which he turned gracefully on his heels in a circle, while his bull plunged at him time after time. This matador did receive tribute from the crowd, but I was shocked to notice it took the form of a few hamburo hats and a bottle of wine from which he promptly

drank. The homburg hats were thrown back to their owners by an assistant, who looked in vain for some feminine homage. I have a feeling that the sport, though no less cruel, must have been more picturesque when Prince Charles saw his bullfight in the Plaza Mayor.

On our return we called at an open-air cocktail bar run by the widow of a famous Madrid lawyer killed by the Republicans during the civil war. It is what used to be the garden of a private house in the Plaza de la Lealtad, which faces the Prado. There are arbours and a little brook of clear water with a miniature lake, and a cocktail bar covered over with climbing vine. It is a good place to meet the sons and daughters of professional men—doctors, writers, and men of law—and it has that same youthful spirit that one found in Paris in the early twenties. It was this galaxy of young men in lounge suits, and carefree girls in printed frocks with large summery hats, and all this idle chatter that staggered me, for I was still in tune with the grim abnegation of an empire at death blows. A tall young Spaniard was talking politics to a group of pretty girls, who were complaining about something or other. 'Give us time,' he said. 'The war has only been over three years!'

'The war has only been over three years!' But was it over? Spain was in the grip of the greatest political vendetta ever known in history. One million two hundred thousand Spaniards, of whom eight hundred thousand were intellectuals, languished in jail, together with six hundred thousand women. These people, whose crime was to have obeyed their constitutional Government during the civil war, were gradually being exterminated by firing squads. And as one vendetta leads to another, these one million eight hundred thousand Republicans were, from behind prison bars, busy sowing the seeds of another revolution which they believed would prove even bloodier than the first. Oh, yes. Madrid could look lovely in the sunlight. Her women could look carefree enough in their print dresses, but if one sought below the surface one found a Spain writhing in agony. There was much more starvation than luxury; gay uniforms and iron



Crosses could not compensate for haggard faces in prison cells. The Spaniard, who is generous with the needy beggar, courteous, and proud, makes a fine art of cruelty, inventing forms of mental torture to surpass the worst horrors of the Inquisition. In this smart cocktail bar I met a friend who by a miracle had achieved his release from jail in Barcelona. He told me how at two-thirty each morning the steps of the guards echo along the corridor. All the lights are switched on, and the prisoners to whom sleep has come with such difficulty must hastily dress. They are herded into a gallery, where their names are called. Some of them are grouped on one side of the gallery, the rest on the other, but nobody knows which of the two groups will be chosen to face the firing squad that morning, and which will be reprieved for another twenty-four hours. While the men face each other in heart-breaking uncertainty, the guards nonchalantly consult their lists, or fill up numberless forms with studied slowness.

My friend told me how one morning the guards had come to fetch a prisoner from the death cells, ordering him to dress immediately. When he was ready the prisoner asked:

‘Then it is my last day?’

‘Yes.’

‘I suppose that in these circumstances I can say what I like?’

‘Of course.’

The man, who had been a famous lawyer in Barcelona, and whose heart was broken by three years of mental torture, drew himself up and shouted loud enough for all his comrades to hear:

‘Down with Franco! Long live the Republic!’

These words had hardly escaped his lips when the guards fell on him, fracturing his skull with the butts of their rifles.

Some hours later the murdered man’s companions learned that what the prison guards had called his last day was supposed to be his last day in jail before release—not his last day of life.

In this prison also, a youth in his early twenties was called to the governor’s office to hear of the death of his aged mother, who had just died in poverty in Barcelona. He was doing

his military service when the civil war broke out, and fought with the Republicans. He was arrested in Barcelona after the war, and was condemned to death, without a chance of saying a word in his defence. His father and two of his brothers were killed during the war, and his sister and another brother had been shot by Franco's men after the war, but now that his mother had died he remained the last member of his family, and even his political enemies thought that he had paid a sufficient price. He was, therefore, condemned to thirty years and one day's imprisonment, and when his comrades heard of his good luck they congratulated him with the same joy as if they themselves were being reprieved.

'Franco will be overthrown long before you have served a tenth of your sentence!' cried his friends.

'Yes!' cried the reprieved man. 'But wait till I get out! I must kill a hundred men to avenge my family!'

The man who told me all these things had a strange experience. He was awakened at two o'clock one morning by a guard who announced that a high official wanted to interview him. In Spain, the small hours of the morning are often chosen for such questionings.

The high official offered him a cigarette, and asked:

'What do you think of the political situation?'

'Before I answer that question I must know whether I am talking as a prisoner or as a free man.'

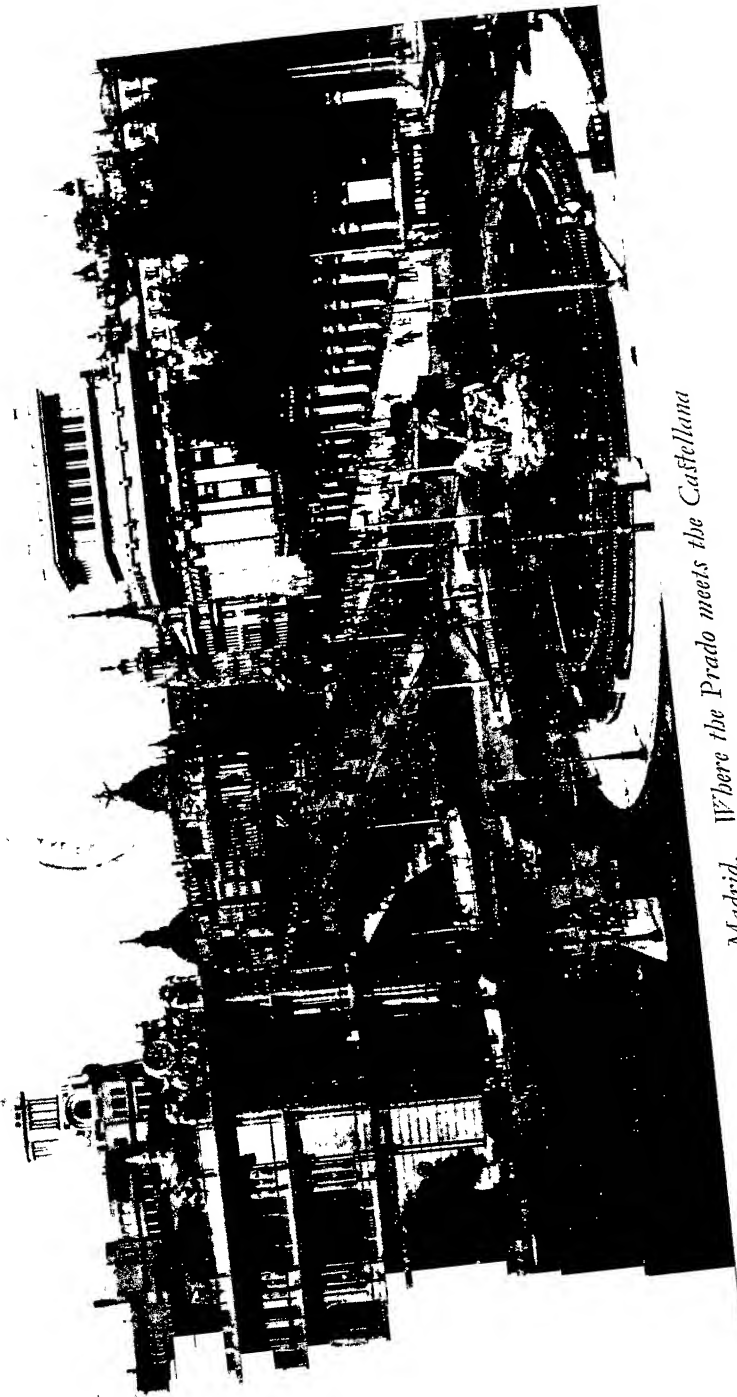
'As a free man.'

'In that case I believe it will be difficult to achieve peace with nearly two million political prisoners.'

The high official puffed slowly at his cigarette and answered:

'You're probably right. But just imagine what would happen if we set them all free. There would be a revolution right away!'





Madrid. Where the Prado meets the Castellana

THERE is a place in Madrid that specializes in authentic mantillas, and I went in one morning to ask if I might look at them. I found there an old lady with kindly eyes in a very wrinkled face, who had spent all her life amongst these treasures. She handled them with the tender love of a mother for a new-born child. She patted them and stroked them, and opened them out and put the lace against a background of red satin, so that one might admire the handiwork. These superb black mantillas are mostly made in the convents, and everything, including the tulle, is made by hand. She taught me to distinguish between Chantilly and Spanish blonde, and showed me rare pieces where the two were used together. Some of them measured three yards and were straight; others were worked in the form of a fan, and she showed me how to put them on and drape them over the shoulders, and the jewels of this collection weighed no more than a feather. The most beautiful were very expensive, and she would tell me the price, adding quickly: 'I'm not showing you this one with the idea of selling it to you, but only so that you may feast your eyes upon it. Now let me explain. Carmen, bring me that red satin background a moment.' What poor little eyes have become reddened night after night, straining themselves to make such masterpieces which, when they have been bought by some mother for her daughter's dowry, will, I hope, be handed down with care and love for many generations to come. I spent nearly two hours with this charming old lady, listening to her, sharing her admiration for these lovely things, and when, at the end, I apologized for having detained her so long, she answered: 'You have done me the honour of being interested, I could not ask for anything more.'

On my way back to the hotel my thoughts turned once

again to the people in Occupied and Unoccupied France. I wondered what anybody coming from either of these zones would think of Madrid, supposing he were suddenly to be wafted into the Spanish capital. I wanted to consider Madrid as a yard-stick by which to measure conditions on the other side of the Pyrenees. This question was answered for me quite unexpectedly by a French newspaper called *Candide*, a copy of which I saw displayed outside a kiosk near the Prado. A special correspondent of the paper, recently sent to Madrid, described his reactions in these words:

'Madrid has been celebrating the fête-day of its patron, Saint Isidore. The population, already sweltering in the first heat-wave of the year, turns out in the cool of the evening to take the air and admire a firework display which draws forth admiring cries. We, who have just arrived from France, are rather surprised by the sight of all these harmless rockets, the thunder of these explosions that kill nobody.

'I must describe to you the street scenes of the capital. The most normal things fill those of us who have just arrived from France with surprise. Consider that the city blazes with light all the evening, and that we are able to prevent our feet from stumbling without the aid of a torch; that we can read a newspaper on the terrace of a café at one o'clock in the morning, and that there are absolutely no restrictions in the restaurants. Some restaurants display mountains of lobsters—not cardboard lobsters, but real ones that came out of the sea! Life radiates everywhere, wonderful normal life, in all its simplicity and its pomp.

'What strikes a Frenchman is the wealth of the shops, so full of clothes and shoes which you are actually allowed to buy. There is food also. We entered a shop warily, as if we were doing something wrong. We addressed the assistant in a low voice, fearing to be snubbed. "Would it be possible, would it be against the law to buy a biscuit, or an orange, or a banana?" Instead of hearing the harsh query: "Are you on our list?" the assistant answered: "How many pounds?" We were handed a neat parcel, done up with real string, and we heard, for the first time in two years, those unbelievable

words: "Is there anything else you require?" We thought we must be dreaming.

'What a lot of shops! There are bags made of real leather—calf, morocco, lizard, and crocodile; there are suitcases and trunks. There is wine, yes, wine, and liqueurs—chartreuse, benedictine, and Grand Marnier. There are hams and sausages in the pork butchers' shops, and watches in the jewellery shops. And will you believe it when I tell you that the crowds do not stop and stare at these marvels, but just go about their way as if such things were normal?

'What is to be found in the restaurants is absolutely unbelievable. The ordinary menu of a good restaurant includes hors-d'œuvre (with oil!), fish or eggs, meat and fruit. The first time I went in I felt ashamed of eating what was put in front of me, remembering friends I had left behind. The most dreadful thing is that before many days one takes these things for granted. It even happens that one starts to grumble. How dearly I would have loved to fill my pockets with a few fried potatoes to take back to France—or a piece of crab, or half a cutlet. I could have cried to see people leave fried potatoes uneaten on their plates. Good-bye, fried potatoes, so beloved by Parisians in the days of peace! I have seen you again, but only for a fleeting moment. I must return to France.'

IT was arranged that I should take the eight-twenty train one evening for Algeciras.

I had already found a passionate interest in my journey by sleeping-car from Lisbon to Madrid. This one, that was to take me to the most southerly part of Spain, was to prove no less picturesque, for though I did not feel it at the time, I was lucky enough not to be able to obtain a sleeper, and was accordingly obliged to spend over eighteen hours in a crowded compartment, which experience I would not have missed for the most comfortable feather bed. The train was packed by the time I reached the station, though there was more than half an hour before the time of departure. Not only was the train full, but the platform was humming with life. Spaniards are a clean race, and the men well dressed, so that this was not a crowd that one instinctively shunned because of its evil odour, but it was simply a great multitude of people, of every sort and kind, whose idea was to make the most noise and to collect the greatest possible number of bottles of fresh water to quench its thirst during the heat and the dust of the long nocturnal journey. The train was extremely long, and the compartment in which my seat was reserved was near the locomotive. It was a corner seat, not by the window, but by the corridor. I found myself facing a tall bony man with a prominent Spanish nose, sharp eyes, and a shiny neck, that made one think of a fowl that had just been plucked. He was all elbows and angles, but with a proud though rather dreamy expression and a tuft of hair brushed back from the forehead. This man was already deep in the Spanish translation of a novel by Arnold Bennett. On my side by the window was a middle-aged man, rather stout and bald, with an expansive nature that made it clear that before long he would be on speaking terms with everybody in the compartment; and facing him on the opposite corner seat was a young man twenty-seven or twenty-eight



years of age, slim, dark, with finely chiselled features, an extremely intelligent forehead, and aristocratic tapering hands, who, in due course, we were to learn was a lawyer travelling to Ronda. Between the expansive gentleman and myself was a youth in the very early twenties, who for the next fourteen hours slept and read in turn, and his literature consisted of a translation into Spanish of a thriller by Edgar Wallace.

The evening was very warm, without a breath of air, and, as so often happens in hot countries, it seemed that the sun before setting was at its strongest. The door of our compartment was open, and both our own windows and those of the corridor, so that as soon as the train started it was clear that it would be idle to try to escape from the grime that would cake us long before our arrival. Already the draught, though cool and refreshing, was blowing eddies of accumulated dust into the compartment, which was by no means clean at the start, and the fact that we were so near to the locomotive, and that, unlike those in Portugal, it burned coal, added to the dirt that caked our clothes and clotted our hair. If our compartment was full it was as nothing to the crowd that packed the corridor, leaning out of the windows, sitting on trunks, stretched out on the floor, and, indeed, in any position, vertical or horizontal, that seemed best suited for the start of a long journey. Nevertheless a restaurant attendant managed, probably because of great experience or of a natural gift of overcoming human obstacles, to wend his way slowly along the corridor, ringing the bell which announced that dinner was served. I hurried to my feet at this welcome sound, and proceeded to fight my way to the very end of the train where the restaurant car was to be found, and I eventually arrived there sore and bruised because of the mad shimmy of the couplings that rattled and danced and tried desperately to throw the unwary passenger rash enough to attempt the crossing from one carriage to the next. It was at one of the perilous steel-plate passages that a little girl of seven or eight screamed with fear as she found herself unable to escape from it, and finding myself just behind I was able

to help her across, after which her mother, herself, and I shared a table in the restaurant car. It was the first time that I had sat down to a meal in an international dining-car since before the fall of France, for on the evening of our departure from Lisbon I had eaten some sandwiches provided for me by the hotel. I must confess that I was much affected by the experience of taking dinner in one of these familiar coaches in wartime. I do not know whether I am oversensitive, but a crowd of memories came rushing back, and I looked with fascination and wonder on the *maitre d'hôtel* in his chocolate uniform, on those bottles of red and white wine that are always to be found in front of one's plate, and which the waiter opens with such dexterity after you have made your choice, throwing the cork into a basket and hurrying off with his corkscrew to the next table. I found it almost heart-rending to read again those advertisements that the Wagons-Lits always put up above the glass doors: 'Paris—Hôtel Continental; Brussels—The Palace Hotel; Vichy—Hôtel du Parc.' And I do not know which gave me the greater pain: to dream that the war was all a ghastly nightmare, and that nothing could possibly have happened to change the face of the earth since I was comfortably ensconced in a *wagon-restaurant*, or to ponder on the cynic who had allowed these advertisements to remain when Paris and Brussels were in the hands of the infidel, and Vichy was less famous as a spa than as the symbol of a defeated nation. The meal was neither better nor worse than I have eaten a hundred times in these restaurant cars, where the service is rapid and efficient and the food piping hot. I exclude the bread that is not eatable, but we had chicken and green peas, and a basket of oranges, bananas, plums, and cherries, and the wine waiter, looking unchanged since I saw him last (or was it his colleague?), came along after coffee with half a dozen *liqueur* bottles in his hand, singing out the names from long experience as he placed a glass beside one: Cointreau or benedictine, brandy or kummel, Grand Marnier . . . names long forgotten except in night clubs at five pounds a bottle in London. The little girl and her mother, after exchanging

with me a few remarks common to polite people all over the world, ate sedately, looking out of the window from time to time to admire the sunset over the distant mountains, and whereas I had been disappointed with the flat, war-weary plain that had greeted me outside Madrid on the morning of my arrival, I was now enchanted with the very lovely country through which we passed, with its blue lakes and rich valleys, and most of all its vineyards, where the green leaves were beginning to turn russet at the edges. We smoked a cigarette, and I asked the little girl's mother where they were going, and this question, which I had feared first of all might seem rude, was rewarded with a glint of triumph and satisfaction as she answered 'Home'; then realizing that however expressive this word undoubtedly is in every language I could hardly be expected to guess where their home was, she added: 'Ronda.'

I could not do less than hope they would not be too tired at the end of such a very long journey, for the morning would be over by the time they were there, whereupon the woman answered to my surprise that any journey seemed short so long as one was returning to one's own roof. 'For,' she added, 'so many people in Europe have no longer a home of their own.' The *maitre d'hôtel* was already beginning to hover about our table, anxious to get rid of us so that he might lay the second service, so we started off, pitching and tossing over the couplings, and squeezing our way through the crowds in the corridors, and having seen my friends safely to their compartment I took possession once again of my corner seat.

As our train chugged along the scenery was continually changing. At one time it was rich and verdant; an hour later as flat as an Argentine ranch, with here and there an *estancia* built with a stout and high wall all round it to protect the master and the servants, the home and the stables, self-supporting, with its own water windmill with metal fans, such as you may see outside Buenos Aires. Now we came across distant mountains with the flat country prevailing near the track, and there was an occasional wheat field thinning

off at the edges, and a farmer riding home on a donkey while his wife walked behind him with a load on her head. The stout gentleman in the corner offered a cigarette to the young lawyer sitting opposite him—one of those cigarettes already rolled in paper, but which for some reason or other the smoker has to unroll and screw up again in another piece. The lawyer repaid this gift by discussing a few trivialities in the pleasantest way, but, as I suspected at the beginning of the journey, the stout gentleman was not going to be content with an audience of a single person, and so looking round the compartment and picking upon me, he handed me the magazine that he had been looking at ever since I returned from the dining-car. I thanked him politely, and took the paper, which proved to be the *Adler*, written in Spanish, but edited and printed by the Air Ministry in Berlin, and entirely devoted to photographs and articles extolling the Luftwaffe. The Nazis distribute this weekly magazine in Spain. I felt no particular ill feeling towards the stout gentleman for this lack of tact. That he had bought this paper did not necessarily mean that he had any marked sympathy for our enemies, but rather that he had been hard up for something to read, and that it was the first thing that struck his eye on the book-stall. Nevertheless I handed it back most politely after keeping it no longer than a few moments so that without appearing discourteous I could at least testify my lack of interest, if not my censure. By this time he had offered more cigarettes, and was well on his way to directing a general conversation in the carriage, and I was not loath to hear discussion turn on the thousand-bomber raid on Cologne, which did a good deal to soothe any resentment caused by the *Adler*, for it was abundantly clear that not only were my fellow passengers thoroughly impressed by this manifestation of the striking power of the R.A.F., but they were also by no means sorry to see the Germans so richly punished. Our compartment was now covered in fine white dust, and so also, I regret to say, were my clothes, for the windows were wide open, and as we were slowing down we collected quite an appreciable amount of the country-side through which we were passing.

At nightfall I made my way to the Malaga sleeping-car, where a friend of mine had been fortunate enough to secure a berth, though it meant that he had to turn out at seven o'clock in the morning. He was to share his compartment with a portly wine merchant from Jerez, of whom he had the greatest distrust, believing that he might be an agent of the Gestapo in disguise. While we were talking I took up a Baedeker, which he happened to have brought with him, and I was idly studying our route when I discovered that we were about to run into Alcazar, the country of Don Quixote, and that if one looked out of the window one would see a great number of the windmills against which he so nobly gave battle. This news gave me a tremendous thrill, but it was no good looking out of the window, for it was already pitch dark, and the moon had not yet risen, but I imagined the windmills, and I admit that this gave me as much pleasure as if I had seen them. At Alcazar a young woman put her head into the window and asked for Pedro, who turned out to be the conductor. They were obviously in love, and we watched them talking a moment before they embraced, bidding one another a loving good night.

It was 1.15 a.m. The train had pulled up at a little station, and a full moon lit up the country-side, revealing a whole chain of arid sugar-loaf mountains on the top of which just a few palms were silhouetted against the sky. Cherry-trees, laden, their branches so close to us that we could almost have picked the fruit, made a canopy over the platform, down which youngsters were running with water for sale. This exotic scene was so picturesque in the pale moonlight that one had the impression of being on an enchanted island in the Pacific. A dog barked from a nearby house, and suddenly a whole cart-load of sheep began answering the call. Our locomotive gave a shrill shriek, like the great engines of the New York Central, a bell tolled in the night, and we were off once more heading to the south. The first hours of the night are the longest to those in search of rest. Because of the great heat the windows of the compartment were wide open, which at least kept the air cool and sweet.

though our limbs were clogged with a gummy grime. It was now no longer possible to pass along the corridor, for there were people sleeping everywhere, and the lawyer had lowered the light in our compartment to allow any of us who were so inclined to do the same. But for most of us sleep was out of the question, for every now and then our train would stop at a station, and we could hear that shrill cry: 'Agua, agua . . . agua,' that seemed to pierce the eardrums. From time to time the perfume of mimosa or honeysuckle would be wafted into our carriage from some bush or tree on the platform, and we would turn over restlessly, knowing that we should soon have to abandon any idea of rest. Somebody put on the light again, and the portly gentleman offered another cigarette to the lean gentleman who, for the first time, was beginning to take an interest in life. He was returning to Cordoba, which was his native city, and he was beginning to become excited at the prospect of arriving home. He sang the praises of its lemon- and orange-trees, and its shining white walls, and pitted the Roman bridge over the Guadalquivir against anything that even Seville had to offer, and as he spoke his eyes shone and he became more animated. We reached Cordoba at 5 a.m., and one would have thought that half the city had stormed the platform to welcome us. Our fellow passenger seized his bags, and after making us a low bow departed from the carriage. The entire corridor was in an uproar, and what with the people trying to get in, and those attempting to get out, the unfortunate sleepers were being tossed about like flotsam. A man who passed our carriage saw the seat vacated by our friend and gave a great cry of triumph as if he had suddenly won a sweep-stake. Throwing a parcel on it to stake his claim he hurried off, and a few moments later returned with a woman in the late fifties, dressed in black; with a complexion as white as flour, and thin, pinched lips. This lady sat on the edge of the seat, and looked round at us with a rather haughty expression, which we resented, not being able to see ourselves in the mirror, for by now we all looked like scarecrows except, possibly, the lawyer, who remained quite unruffled. The new-

comer then advanced a cheek for the gentleman to peck before saying good-bye to her. On the platform children were passing along offering cherries, oranges, and water. The moon and the little gas jets gave a ghostly look to the station, and to what glimpses of the town we could see. There was now no longer any question of sleep; I felt all my bones aching, and when I put my hand to my hair I could feel that it was like barbed wire, and all clotted with soot.

We suddenly became aware of a minor revolution in the corridor. A woman in the forties with the most beautiful eyes, an olive complexion, and hair that was turning grey with occasional white streaks, put her head just inside our carriage, and started holding forth to somebody we could not see on the platform. Her powerful voice rose and fell like music, and her remarks were taken up and answered with rhythmical volleys by her interlocutor. I was fascinated by this woman, for at her age most Spanish women have lost their bloom, becoming dried up like olives, but her cheeks were still fresh, and when she smiled, which was often, there appeared the most expressive little lines round her eyes. One felt by instinct that she must have been really lovely in her youth to retain so much beauty now. She wore ear-rings and a little blue coat—a very simple coat though scrupulously clean, often brushed so that in places it was worn. I was certain that she was connected with the stage, and though I cannot say very precisely what gave me that conviction there are some deductions that appear conclusive; and when, just behind her in the corridor, I caught sight of a lean, angular man with a cadaverous expression, and a very big and pointed nose, I knew that he was the tragedian of a travelling troupe, of which the woman was a member. The tragedian was turning bald, and his neck was long, thin, and scraggy. He remained silent for some time, until the woman turned round to question him, and then he answered with a voice that seemed to come from the grave—a deep, melodious voice accustomed, I thought, to declaiming Calderon. The woman went back into the corridor, where she installed herself on a valise, with her back to the window, and I think I must have

dozed for a few moments after which, reopening my eyes, I saw, framed in the door leading to the corridor, a slim figure wearing a white kerchief over her jet-black hair, with a blood-red rose above her right ear. Amongst all these passengers worn out by fatigue after a journey that had lasted over nine hours, covered with soot, ill combed, and with drooping lids, this apparition was startling. Her enormous eyes, under long painted lashes, blinked seductively at the portly gentleman and the good-looking young lawyer, who flinched under that feminine gaze to the very obvious discontent of the lady with the white cheeks and the pursed lips. Our apparition was holding delicately between forefinger and thumb a small bunch of raw carrots, which she held out smilingly to the portly gentleman, who was making gurgling noises in the corner. He refused timidly, for this man, who had so successfully engaged in conversation the men in his compartment, seemed to have lost all power of speech. The apparition, having given him a look of commiseration, turned towards a young man in the corridor, who, quite obviously, by virtue of his broad shoulders and caressing eyes, was the Adonis of the cast, and it was to his long, tapering fingers that the carrots found their way. There was something so Scarronesque about this scene that it appeared entirely seventeenth century; for you must imagine that the corridor was still filled with the strangest assortment of passengers, most of whom had travelled with us all the way from Madrid. A second apparition now became visible with features as delicate as the first, but whereas the first had narrow pencilled arcs above her eyes, her companion had her natural eyebrows. Nevertheless both were equally dark, both had the same kerchiefs over their hair, with identical red flowers. The next moment we temporarily lost sight of these two young actresses (for they also were quite obviously members of the same troupe), while the elderly woman reappeared in the doorway to take up once more the conversation she had broken off with the unseen person on the platform, and this went on until we heard the whistle of the locomotive, whereupon our train began to move out of the station. Soon we were



wending our way southward again through mountainous country, where the moon shone upon cactuses, olive groves, and fig-trees. As soon as the elderly woman had gone back to her seat in the corridor the two actresses returned, and by this time the lawyer and the portly gentleman had sufficiently recovered their senses to make signs to them that they would be honoured if these young ladies would occupy a portion of their seating space near the windows, which offers were gratefully accepted.

We learned that the first apparition was known as Vitoria Madrid, and that her companion was a dancer who went by the name of Minerva, of whom we must certainly have heard.

'Open your travelling case and show them one of those leaflets giving all the details of your career,' said Vitoria Madrid, undoing her kerchief. Minerva made a sleepy sign that she had not got her travelling bag.

'It is I who have it,' put in the elderly lady, who had been listening to the conversation. 'Allow me to introduce myself as the Granadina. We have been playing at Cordoba; this evening we shall play at Ronda, and soon, I hope, we shall be performing at La Linea.' The lawyer sprang up to carry the travelling bag to his companion. It was really a small leather jewel case, with a linen cover to prevent the leather from becoming scratched. Minerva was undoubtedly the star of the troupe, and she gave herself languid airs that contrasted with the rather puckish humour of her companion. The leaflet which she handed round had been designed with a number of photographs of herself in leading roles by her publicity agent in Madrid. She was described as 'Minerva—atracción máxima. En el firmamento de las variedades ha surgido una neuva estrella, la diosa que sabe tejer de forma maravillosa las clásicas danzas.'

I looked with interest at the new star who had not only arisen in the music-hall world, but also in our compartment. She wore a brick-red dress with a lace collar, a bracelet of four or five rows of tiny pearls, and a garish ornament round the neck. Her coiffure was made by taking a lock from above each ear, plaiting them and joining them on the crown which

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allowed her hair to fall naturally at the back. A bright flower above the right ear, and you have the most perfect Spanish type. Both she and her companion used a very dark red lipstick, and their eyes were heavily made up.

The Granadina, sitting on her valise in the corridor, put her head in her hands, and tried to sleep, for they had not packed up at the theatre until well after midnight, and had remained gossiping until the arrival of the train, but sleep was not possible in the position she found herself in, and after a few moments she opened her lovely eyes with a smile that gave one to understand that she was content to undergo the inconveniences of her profession. A few soldiers, more successful than she, were fast asleep, some of them while standing up, and one would see their heads falling lower and lower in jerks until, on the point of slithering to the floor, they woke up with a look of pained surprise. Towards 6 a.m. a *maître d'hôtel* bravely made his way along the corridor, and although he rang no bell I took it for granted that there must be a restaurant car still attached to the train, and giving up my seat to the lawyer, who had been singularly cramped since his gallant act, I went off in search of something to drink. At the table I had occupied the night before, I found the little girl and her mother, who were drinking synthetic coffee and milk, into which they had put a handful of wood strawberries. The bread was no more edible than it had been at Madrid, but there were plenty of oranges, and there was a marmalade probably made of quince that people ate with a spoon. The glowing light of morning showed us a splendidly rich country, mountainous, with fertile valleys full of cherry-trees, fig-trees, a few fields of wheat, olive groves, vines, many cactuses, and multicoloured flowers, the names of which I did not know. I bought a dozen oranges for a few pesetas, which I planned to distribute among the weary folk in our compartment who had not followed me to the restaurant car, but it was some time before I could reach my coach because the train was running into a junction where the sleeping-car for Malaga was to be unhitched, and there was already a great effervescence in the air.

Soldiers were drinking from pitchers of baked red clay that many of the passengers had brought with them. They threw back their heads, and allowed the cool fresh water to pour into their throats without letting the spout touch their lips, and one never even saw them swallow. When finally I reached my compartment I passed round the oranges, which the portly gentleman skinned because he was the only person to own a pocket knife. Minerva put a quarter to her lips with a ladylike air, but her companion made no bones about manners, and ate two oranges gluttonously. Already the sun was beginning to burn, and although our dancers could still make their eyes sparkle, they appeared very sad little things in the full brilliance of daylight, for their cheeks, robbed of rouge, were sallow, their features were drawn by fatigue, and certainly also by lack of nourishment, and their little dresses were worn at the elbows. Minerva put her head against the lawyer's shoulder, and was soon fast asleep, and I also was beginning to feel my eyelids close, for the hot sun brought back the desire to rest that the night had robbed me of. Even now sleep was not easy, for every half-hour or so the train stopped and I heard that cry of 'Agua, agua . . . agua,' which had so often driven me to desperation.

Ronda. It was a little sunlit station where hollyhocks grew and where vines covered the roofs of the houses. In the goods yard were a number of powerful-looking locomotives, and huge reservoirs for water. Our travelling troupe hurried out of the train, counting its members on the platform, and waving to us amiably. The *Granadina* called to us:

'We 'll see you at La Linea.'

'Perhaps . . . at La Linea.'

The stout gentleman left also, and so did the lady with the pinched lips and my friend with the little girl. Only the lawyer remained, but the empty seats were quickly occupied by a crowd of soldiers, many of whom carried jackknives hanging from their belts by lanyards of the national colours of Spain. The hilts of the knives were decorated with the

swastika. In the corridor a young fellow who wore the Iron Cross was bragging about his exploits on the Eastern Front.

The country was becoming more and more splendid, for the mountains were now quite majestic, and the valleys, in which there were a few turbulent streams, were green and rich. Beautiful Italian poplars grew amongst the olive-trees, and the railway banks were sweet with syringa growing in blood-red earth. It was two o'clock in the afternoon when we caught sight of the Rock of Gibraltar. The hotel in Madrid had given me a small luncheon-box, which I had not used, and remembering this now I offered it to one of the soldiers, whose eyes bulged with delight, and he spent the next ten minutes packing it all away carefully in his case. Then looking at the Rock, of which we had a splendid view, he said to me with a wide sweep of his arm, as if making me a present of it:

‘What strength! What power!’

But he was really thinking of his luncheon-box.

ALGECIRAS is a city of dazzling white houses nestling at the foot of a range of high mountains. It faces the Rock of Gibraltar, across a horse-shoe bay of deep blue water, in which dolphins disport themselves, and from this bay, when the weather is clear, you may look across the Mediterranean at the African coast—at Ceuta, as white as Algeciras itself, at the great Atlas mountains, behind which is Tetuan, and towards Tangier, hidden from view by Tarifa, which is not only the most southerly point of Spain, but also the most southerly tip of Europe. Algeciras has a fine harbour, in which for many months now two Italian cargo vessels, quite deserted, have been moored to the outer mole. These ships, which were scuttled and beached by their crews to prevent capture by the British when Italy declared war, were salvaged by the Spanish authorities, and brought here for internment. The packets from Ceuta and Tangier run into Algeciras, and so do ferry boats from the Rock, but the city lives mostly on its fishing fleet, which congregates in the inner harbour between the railway line to Madrid and the fish market. On a hot day, and every summer day in Algeciras is hot, the lower town smells of fish, of brine, and of tar. The railway line, and a narrow river crossed by wooden bridges, divide the city proper from the rich villas. At the far end of these villas stands the Cristina, a large, rambling luxury hotel with huge, cool public rooms and balconies set in the centre of an exotic garden, in which there are mimosa-trees and stately palms, blood-red hibiscus and cactuses, and a multitude of shrubs that have run wild since the war began, invading the once carefully tended flower-beds where you may still find sweet-smelling English roses as large as a man's fist, and the most beautiful carnations. It so happened that on my first Sunday in Algeciras a fiesta began that lasted for eight whole days and nights. Early in the morning the packets from Ceuta and Tangier had brought in thousands of Arabs in picturesque

garb, some of whom had come for a holiday, others to sell their wares, and all to see the bullfights, the first of which was at six-thirty in the evening. At about the same time the ferry from the Rock arrived with great numbers of Gibraltarians—nearly all men, because their wives and children were evacuated to various parts of the world—some to England, others to Madeira, and yet others as far away as Jamaica. It was ten o'clock in the morning, and the fishing fleet had brought in its night's catch, which was being taken to the market alongside the quay. There were sardines and mackerel, red mullet, swordfish, which make excellent eating, and ugly-looking members of the shark family. Many fishermen had gone out in row-boats fitted with acetylene lamps. Two powerful lamps hang over the stern, and two, if not three, on either side of the boat, and when this great glare has attracted sufficient fish, the nets are thrown over to make a mixed haul. The quay was very animated, and so were the little streets just behind, where the peasant women come out to lay their produce in baskets on the kerb all round the covered central market. It was quite a rich market compared with most Spanish towns. There were eggs in small quantities and at a great price, big black plums, a few strawberries, cherries in plenty, figs, cabbages, and goat's cheese, the crust of which is made by hanging the curd to dry in the sun after it has been covered with a layer of oil. The cheese is as soft as cream to start with, and I like it best that way, but by keeping it becomes as hard as Parmesan, and that is how it is mostly eaten, doubtless for economy. The peasants selling their produce in and around the market wear white aprons and white caps, which are picturesque as well as clean, but though the law is generally enforced some of the older women are recalcitrant. Bearded Moroccan Arabs with beady eyes, wearing the fez, moved slowly and silently through the crowd, their large, sunburned feet in thick yellow sandals. Because of the great heat many were buying cheap straw hats with broad brims to place over the fez for added protection from the sun's glare. From time to time a dozen or



more men with sombreros and red sashes would come along on horseback eyeing the girls as they passed. They were of all ages, from mere boys to men in the fifties who had grown a little stout, and whose red sashes drew attention to their comfortable bellies. Little boys in Andalusian dress passed through the streets on ponies, their sisters riding side-saddle behind. The girls wore red-fringed shawls, coral necklaces, and wide red dresses with white spots, and their hair was done up with big Spanish combs, and decorated with red carnations. The narrow streets leading up to the Plaza Alta and the cathedral were filled with people, and there were lovely women, not only amongst the crowd, but also peering at the scene from behind the wrought-iron bars, known in Spanish as *rejas*, which protect the windows, and through which young Andalusians court the girls before being formally engaged. The civil guards with their three-cornered hats walked along in pairs, their faces beaming with pleasure and indulgence, but the security police, whose uniforms and methods are modelled on Nazi lines, kept much to themselves, scanning the features of the passers-by, and one would almost have thought that these men had been chosen for their evil expressions, and the leer in their shifty eyes. There were no motor cars in the streets, but there were some landaus and a few Maltese carriages, although, as a general rule, pedestrians occupied the centre of the thoroughfares, leaving the pavements to the cafés and side-shows. Women and girls sold flags to the men, which instead of being pinned to the lapel, were fixed to the buttonhole by turning down a loop in the paper, and only the rare British visitors dared refuse the thirty cents which this flag cost, for the others, who were Spanish or Gibraltarians, knew that a man would not be served in a shop or in a café without his flag, because otherwise the body responsible for the 'charity' would go along and fine the shopkeeper or the café owner a considerable sum of money. Nevertheless, nature is such that I saw a young man tear up his emblem and throw it away in order to have a new one fastened to his coat by a particularly attractive young woman. A boy of not more than eight or nine years was entertaining

a whole café with his remarkable violin playing, while his gipsy parents accompanied him on guitars. On the pavement, beside the chairs, two shoeblacks were cleaning the largest pair of shoes it is possible to imagine, and when the crowd asked to whom they belonged, the boys answered:

‘To the giant.’

‘But a real giant? A live giant?’

‘Yes, of course. He ’ll be back any moment.’

There was something almost medieval about these streets, in which so much was going on; and which were becoming so full that the carriages taking the more opulent inhabitants to mass were obliged to thread their way carefully through the crowds. The cathedral is about half-way up the town if you take the market to be its lowest part, and the bullring and the fair ground to be its highest. It is an impressive though not particularly beautiful edifice, and there was a great gathering of worshippers for mass, so that even the aisles were occupied with chairs. The mantilla was as general here as in Madrid, though less rich in design, and I saw an elderly woman dressed in black with the mantilla who, kneeling beside me, wielded her fan with a grace and a dexterity that filled me with admiration. This art has disappeared outside Spain, and even here it is not being passed on to the younger generation. But how beautiful it is to watch! After a few moments she would close the fan with a click, only to turn it the other way, and reopen it. There is a perfect rhythm in those movements of the wrist, and my neighbour practised her art without effort or thought. Perhaps she was born with this gift, having watched her mother fan herself on sultry Andalusian afternoons in front of the cradle. The woman knelt at a high-backed chair, and the hand that held the fan was resting on the other. Her eyes were closed, and her lips moved slowly as she recited her prayers. How noble and aristocratic is this race. On my left was a family represented here by two sisters and a little boy, who is a marquis, for the father was killed during the civil war when the battleship on which he was serving was torpedoed. I knew this little boy to be the owner of more land than a

horseman could ride across between dawn and sunset, and I knew also that, young as he was, he already had the fighting spirit in him, for the other day I had been invited to his home just outside the town where, in the afternoon, mounted on a Shetland pony, he had gathered all the children of the neighbourhood together, forming them into two camps—the Spaniards and the ‘Japanese’—and set them upon each other with real stones as missiles, while the little girls stood by, in Red Cross uniforms, to tend the wounds, and before tea time there were so many casualties that we had to take over the role of the nurses. I must add that the ‘Japanese’ were soundly beaten, but that was only to be expected, not only on political grounds, but also because the young marquis was heading the Spaniards.

From the Plaza Alta all roads lead up to the bullring, next to which is the fair with roundabouts and swings and innumerable other attractions, each with its own strident music. Beyond the bullring the downs stretch away to the distant mountains. Most of the farmers who had come into the city on horseback rode up the Calle Alfonso XI to leave their mounts and seek lodging for themselves at the Parador de la Palma, which is Spanish for the Palm-tree Inn, and the place was not altogether misnamed, for at the top of the road was a little park where these trees were much in evidence. The street itself was narrow, with white houses that dazzled my eyes in the afternoon sun. The houses were decorated with beautiful wrought-iron window rails.

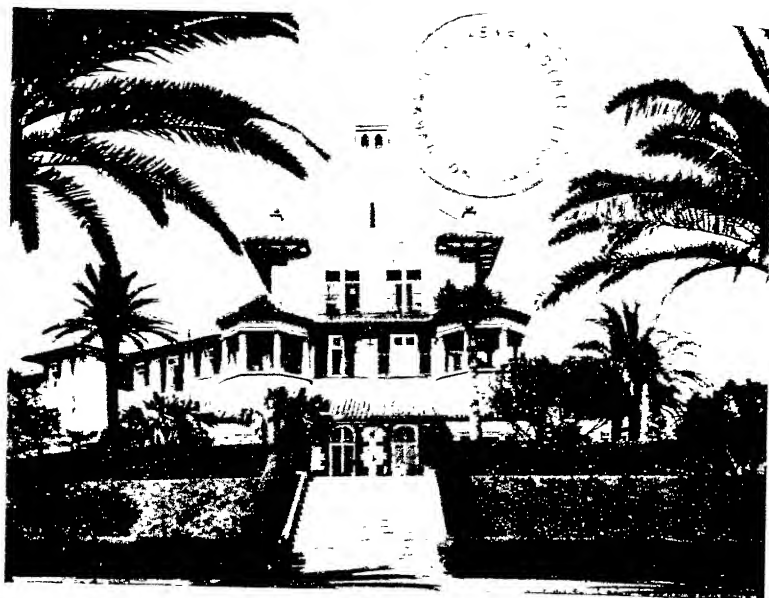
Because of its nearness to the fair ground there were stalls with white linen sides and roofs along one pavement, and in these booths you could buy all manner of things like brooches and bangles, pottery, and nougat; and in and out amongst the crowd moved lean, unshaven men in overalls, selling sticky coloured sweets at the end of a pole. The entrance to the inn was through heavy doors, reinforced with iron bars and nail-heads. These doors were now wide open, and led through a saddlery and under an arch into a courtyard where so many horses and mules and donkeys were stabled that many beasts were obliged to stand in the centre on the cobbles.

under the broiling sun. The inn did not have a sign, but you would have found it because of the very horsey men with proud looks and sombreros who sat on cane chairs beside the entrance where a florist had her booth. Travellers rode right in through the hotel, only dismounting in the courtyard, where the innkeeper ran after them and stood ready to tie up the animals and show his clients to their quarters. The saddlery, that I call so for want of a better name, was what in luxury hotels (where horsemen do not ride straight in) would be the foyer.

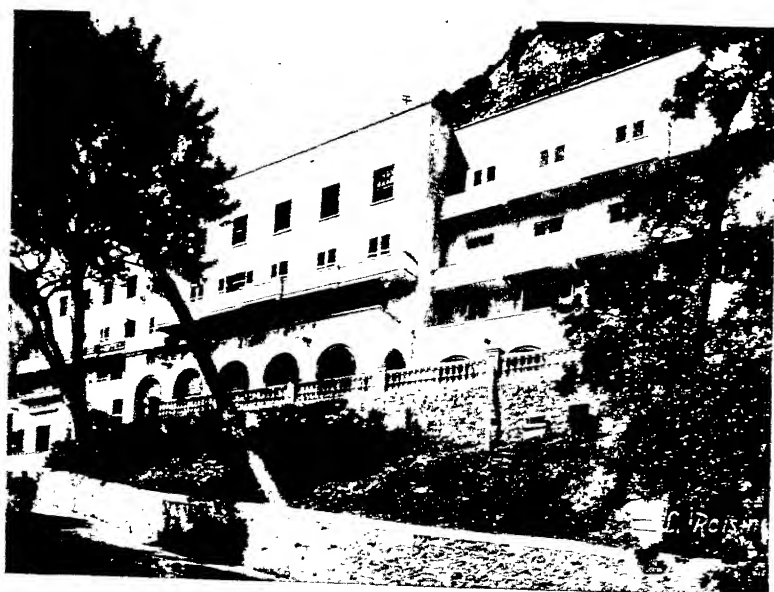
It was as cool and much the same size as a good country barn, and from the walls hung saddles and packs and harness and onions and garlic. A man was fast asleep on a load of hay, and another was recumbent on his arm as he bent over some sacking placed on packing cases. Old carriage lamps and heavy packs hung from the posterns. A staircase of good width and solid wood led up to the rooms. At the end of the barn a little bureau was partitioned off where two girl receptionists sat—one a blonde in a lace blouse, and the other red-haired, who by a strange lack of taste, or perhaps because there was none other available in a country where all the girls are dark, wore a crimson dress. Behind them was a blackboard, with the numbers of the rooms and the times at which guests must be called in the morning. The only bar was a tap on the wall from which flowed ice-cold water from the mountain torrents, which was as invigorating as champagne.

Beyond all this was a good comfortable room, a trifle overfurnished perhaps, but homely, with canaries singing in cages and framed photographs on the mantelpiece, and a big oak table with a white cloth on it, at which guests took their meals whenever they wished, for the kitchen was next door, and there was always Spanish soup on the hob. The innkeeper was delighted if anybody came in to look over his hotel, and he would lead the way into the courtyard, where the sun was strongest in the afternoon, beating down cruelly on the white walls; and here he would point out the sheepskin saddles used by the farmers, and a few extraordinary packs





*The Cristina at Algeciras*



*The Roch Hotel Algiers*

favoured in the old days by smugglers and now cherished by wealthy landowners for sentimental reasons. He would tell the worth of each horse, and show off the young donkeys that even before the age of three will carry a full-grown couple.

The fair at Algeciras was primarily a cattle fair, and the gipsies were so cunning that if a black horse were needed, and there was none, they would dye one overnight, watching to see, as soon as the deal was concluded, whether the farmer's breeches would come over all black as he rode away on his bargain. But to come back to the yard of the Palm-tree Inn, there were rabbit hutches in a corner and a room leading into the arch, where one could generally find men fully dressed asleep on their beds, and the hens wandered all over the place. When a client came to inquire about accommodation the innkeeper would take him upstairs, showing him all the rooms, and even those that were occupied, so that as often as not there might be some groom lying half stripped on the bed, and his wife feeding a baby at the breast, but no guest ever seemed to mind this intrusion. Some farmers had come from as far as Tarifa with the intention of selling the mares they had ridden into town if the price was right, others came from Los Barrios, and still others from the Laguna de la Janda. From the rooms that faced the street one could see the sapphire-blue waters of the bay at the end of one of the short streets that cross the Calle Alfonso XI at right angles, and which were gaily decorated with Japanese lanterns hung across from the first-floor windows, while below were tables laid for dinner by café owners in the vicinity.

Any of these side streets lead to the Calle de Municiones that runs parallel to the Calle Alfonso XI, but almost overlooks the sea. It is a narrow road, with clean white houses and a big barracks half-way down, and it ends up in a thicket of bamboos. If you go as far as the bamboos and turn to the right you will come across a colony of miserable wooden huts inhabited by the very poorest families. Beyond this is a cliff, on the end of which may be seen a herd of swine as in

biblical times. There are a few small shops in the Calle de Municioneros, and there is an old lady who makes fine pottery of baked clay in her back garden; but most of the dazzling white houses carry on the age-old profession to which reference is also made in the scriptures, and if, without previous knowledge, you wandered down this street you would probably wonder at the number of young Spanish girls flitting across the pavement like butterflies. Many visitors come here with no other intention than to listen to the tzigane orchestras, for the Andalusians sing as they speak, and there is music in their veins. The houses are almost Arab, and inside, as well as outside, are of white limestone. Built round a courtyard, in which more often than not there is a fountain and some flowers, they are of two stories, with fine flat roof gardens, from which the girls can see everything going on in the neighbouring streets. The staircase and the walls are white, and the symmetry of their geometrical lines is the only decoration. On the ground floor there is always a fairly large low room in a corner of which the gipsies come and play. Spaniards walking down the street and hearing this music will often stop and look in, and nobody takes this curiosity amiss, for on leaving they will give a couple of pesetas to the woman who runs the place.

Let me describe to you one room that is typical of the others. It is cool, and through the Venetian blinds you can peep into the street without being seen. The walls are painted blue to three-quarters of their height, after which they are white-washed like the ceiling. At one end there is a massive side-board, and there are prints in oak frames on the walls—a fine Saint Bernard dog with a monk, a few pastoral scenes, and so on. Canaries chirrup in a cage by the window—a gilded cage to mock their imprisonment, but they seem as happy and sing as sweetly as the girls whose rich Andalusian voices accompany the musicians as they dance with a few soldiers who have looked in from the barracks up the street.

The woman who owned the place I have described was tall and broad-shouldered, with a deep voice, and hair that was still jet-black, in which she wore a high Spanish comb and a



## A JOURNEY TO GIBRALTAR

sprig of mimosa. She was imposing, and there were little flashes of steel in her eyes that warned one that it was safer not to cross swords with her; but she had a weakness for English cigarettes, and she smoked them without taking them out of her mouth. The corsage of her apron was in the shape of a fan with narrow folds, with the arc at her waist, and the pointed end below her neck. The effect of this well-ironed linen on her black dress was not without beauty. Just as no passer-by ever hesitates to look in if he feels so inclined, even though it's only to crack a joke and walk out again, so everybody in the house comes down to the big room as soon as the musicians arrive, and when there are not enough men to go round, the girls, and even the maids with their aprons and lace bonnets, dance with each other a very complicated tango.

Towards six o'clock in the evening on the first Sunday of the fiesta, the crowd was already moving up to the ring, and it was easy to tell how much more popular is this sport here in Andalusia than in Madrid by the number of women wending their way to it, many of whom wore the white mantilla and carried the fan. The whole town was now in effervescence, and the Arabs who had wandered from café to café all the afternoon with large flat cases which they opened for the benefit of prospective customers, revealing a huge quantity of trinkets and false jewellery, had closed them up and, hugging them under their arms, were determined to forget business for the next two hours. The locomotive of the scenic railway whistled, and all the canned music of the fair seemed to redouble in intensity. Later in the evening the entire fair ground would be a blaze of light visible from as far as Mount Hacho on the North African coast.

At about nine o'clock, as a red sun was setting fire to the mountains above the town, I was seated beside a neglected tennis court in the jungle of exotic undergrowth in the gardens of the Cristina. The evening was very still except for the occasional snapping of a bough in the old mimosa-tree,

which was forming a carpet of gold on the ground immediately below it as the tiny yellow blooms dropped from the dark green spear-like leaves. I wondered if anybody had used this tennis court since the war. Soon it would be overrun, and after the war it would probably be discovered by accident like a city of ancient times submerged by the sea. But the tennis court would be choked by the giant geraniums that grew to tree's height, climbing skywards round the stouter stems of the hibiscus, whose blood-red flowers made the delicate geraniums look like pale cousins. And looking at the bell-shaped white datura I wondered if it was true that to sleep under it meant certain death. The bougainvillaea, with its myriad mauve flowers with orange centres, and its rather musty smell, seemed the most voracious member of the jungle advancing over its enemies, which it covered with a flowering cloak; and then I fell to wondering who had been the gardener here in the prosperous days, and what he would have to say to the plumbago that had covered the Bridge of Sighs over what was once the rock gardens with its luscious green foliage and beautiful clusters of pale blue flowers.

The sun was beginning to lose some of its fierceness, but it never ceased to burn until the last moment before disappearing. How very quiet was the scene! Yet these mountains behind the town faced Gibraltar, and one day they might bristle with heavy guns and the jungle I was sitting by be razed for an aerodrome. Suddenly from the direction of the bay, where a few boys were bathing in the blue water, came the sound of jingling bells, and then the sound of carriage wheels, and a few moments later there passed along the drive a victoria, in which was a lovely woman wearing a cart-wheel hat, accompanied by an elderly gentleman. This return to 1900 seemed hardly credible, and yet not very long afterwards I heard more bells, and a landau came along, followed by a Maltese carriage, and I suddenly realized that these were the guests for the fiesta dance that was to take place in the open air after dinner.



**PROTEAVIDES**

SIGNE DES TEMPS NOUVEAUX : LE  
TAILLEUR EST ROI, TENUE PRATI-  
QUE ENTRA TOUTES, LA VESTE EST



**Monastère** - Temple de saint Nicolas, église de la ville de Saint-Nicolas, dans le département de la Moselle. Elle est dédiée à saint Nicolas, évêque de Myre. Elle est l'un des plus beaux monuments de la ville. Elle est construite en style gothique. Elle a été construite au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Elle a été restaurée au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Elle est classée monument historique.

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Raphaél

Raphaëlle

Raphaél - L'aperte de l'aperte  
quatre-vingt-trois ans  
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Noyaux

Maggie Roult

however, to bring in a little white bread and a box of fifty English cigarettes, that cost two shillings on the Rock, and was worth at least fifty pesetas in Spain. Because of the uneven distribution of wealth it was sometimes difficult to realize how desperately ill-clothed and hungry most of the community was, but twelve tins of drinking chocolate smuggled over from the Rock were sold in the black market in an inland town for no less than eight hundred pesetas, and a man who spent a week at the fair in Seville paid for all his expenses by selling a very old and worn raincoat at the end of his stay. One might have thought that in these circumstances the customs officials at Algeciras would have winked at anything smuggled into the country, but it was even dangerous for anybody coming over for the day from Gibraltar to offer a cigarette as a kindly gesture to a customs man, who might easily answer haughtily: 'We've got more cigarettes than we know what to do with in Spain, and they're better than yours.'

Every now and again I would go into a newsagent's in the Calle Emilio Santagana, where the owner would welcome me with that old-time Spanish courtesy that is still largely to be found. He used to obtain for me from Madrid some weeklies from Unoccupied France, including *Marie-Claire*, which in June published a special number devoted to life in Paris from the feminine point of view. The woman who wrote the main feature in what we still think of as the capital had just spent a month there, and admitted that she found surprises at every step. She said that the elegance of the women was chiefly due to the Parisienne's desire to compensate for the lack of almost everything. She added: 'There is no more material left in the shops? The only thing we can do is to wear lovely hats. The latest invention of the modiste Gabrielle is a fringe of hair attached to the front of a hat, so that it falls over the forehead. There is no more tobacco? The husband goes out with a little spike at the end of his walking-stick to gather cigarette stubs, and his wife goes out to help him hunt. As one can buy nothing without tickets and very little with, the *marché aux puces* and the Hôtel Drouot

play important roles in the life of a Parisienne. There is nothing whatever left in the shops. The shop windows have, therefore, become miniature art galleries, and the desire to please the eye has replaced the urge to sell. In the Galeries Lafayette the mannequins in the windows have a languid air and a notice says: "Ils sont épuisés" ("They are exhausted"). In a neighbouring window there is another mannequin, with the notice "My dress is only for display." A famous shoemaker called Léandre in the rue Miromesnil, having no more shoes to sell, has decorated his window with two Florentine negro statuettes. There is a famous shop called "A la Peau de Porc." It is still in existence, but as there is no more pigskin you will have to be content with handbags made of *ersatz* material. There is no more traffic in the streets, but the police have never been smarter or directed it so well. They wear white gloves with armlets. There are a few bicycles, but in almost every street there is a notice forbidding bicycles. There are many pedestrians, but innumerable white barriers put this or that street out of bounds. These daily worries are so many and so great that the Parisian woman tries to forget them, and the dressmakers, the hairdressers, and the modistes, are harking back to 1900, dreaming of that heedless, carefree age. The hairdressers have done well to put the false chignon back into fashion. Each woman must now comb herself twice—her real hair and her false hair. What surprises most is the renaissance of politeness. We had forgotten it in the pre-war days, when everything was hustle. When you go into a shop now the assistant tells you with a thousand regrets that she has absolutely nothing to sell. At the restaurant Truffe de Périgord there is not a potato to be had, let alone a truffle, but you have no idea of the exquisite politeness of the service—to serve nothing! Every afternoon there is such a long queue outside the tea-rooms in the Champs-Élysées that you must wait over an hour to be served with a cup of chocolate, but you are only allowed six minutes to drink it up and be gone! The newest and most fashionable dressmaker has a long white beard, and his name is Van Dongen, the famous painter. Paris, the city of pigeons,

has none left. They were too good in pies! You cannot, if you are a pigeon, go on playing for ever the role of an appetizing roast without a coupon. On the Quai de la Mégisserie, all the cage birds have disappeared. There was no more seed to feed them. The street name-plates have been brought down to shoulder height so that one can read them by the light of a torch. There are vegetables instead of flowers in the gardens of the Louvre. The only flower gardens left in Paris are on the hats of the women. The entire life of the city stops on Sunday. The railway stations are deserted, the streets are empty. This deathly stillness may be observed also in the evenings during the week. The shops are all closed early, and people have nothing whatsoever to do after five o'clock. Courting couples sit in the squares and, protected by the ghosts of the statues which have all been taken away for scrap metal, dream about the future. . . .'

*Candide* is a weekly paper published at Clermont-Ferrand. Voltaire wrote: 'He had a fairly sound judgment, and the simplest of minds, and for this reason he was known as *Candide*.' This paper has established a reputation for being rather more fearless than the majority of its competitors, and for being brave enough to voice a sound judgment. I found some rather interesting details about the *marché aux puces*, mentioned in *Marie-Claire*. An old pair of leather jackboots will fetch eleven hundred francs, and you would have to pay two hundred francs for a pair of shoes with no soles. The wardrobe master sold the stock of the Odéon Theatre to a second-hand dealer, who adapted the costumes of Molière's characters for modern wear. He also disposed of the crinoline worn by the 'Dame aux Camélias.'

My newsagent was an excellent man, and far too wise to discuss politics, but I learned a good deal from him about local history, on which he was quite an authority. The town was built by the Moors very soon after they arrived in Spain, and, indeed, nearby Tarifa takes its name from Tarif, the Moslem captain who first started the conquest which was to endure for nearly six hundred years. The curious thing is





*Gibraltar : Warships in Harbour*



*The Rock of Gibraltar from the Gardens of the Cristina at Algeciras*



that the Moors were to play another decisive role in the history of Algeciras. One hot July evening in 1936, only a few days after the beginning of the civil war, when they were brought over from Ceuta to make an offensive on Malaga, which was in the hands of the Communists. A fortnight later the Government warship, *Jaime I*, arrived at Punta Carnero, and hugging the coast steamed slowly in the direction of Algeciras, where she was looking for the rebel gunboat, *Eduardo Dato*, which was moored to the pier. The *Jaime I* proceeded to fire a number of twelve-inch shells on the *Eduardo Dato*, and one of the sights of Algeciras is the house between the British Consulate and the Cristina, which received a direct hit. The *Jaime I* steamed away, and the town remained firmly in the hands of General Franco's men for the rest of the civil war.

The people of Algeciras call Gibraltar 'El Cuerpo,' because they say that from their city the Rock looks like a vast human body laid on its back, and covered with a winding-sheet like a dead Titan on his funeral pile; the head towards Spain, the chest arched at Middle Hill, the legs rising gently upwards to the knees at O'Hara's Tower, and then sloping down till the feet rest on Europa Point.

The Algeciras of the Moors was on the south bank of the Rio Miel, but when the English took the Rock in 1704 (its capture by Sir George Rooke was an afterthought following a repulse at Barcelona), the Spanish inhabitants preferred to lose all their possessions rather than remain under foreign domination and, carrying away the archives, they proceeded to form townships in different parts of the neighbouring *campo*, a small number gathering round the oratory of the Virgen de la Palma on the right bank of the river to establish a community which was the foundation of the new Algeciras.

Most of the fugitives after 1704 had, however, fled to San Roque, a few miles inland; others went even further, to Los Barrios.

My newsagent's love of history was demonstrated in many ways. His shop was decorated with the most intriguing pictorial map of the province of Cadiz, in which we were,

showing ducks on the Laguna de la Janda, bulls being reared for the ring at Los Barrios, and a fine young fellow with a sombrero making love to a beautiful dark-haired girl with a red shawl through the iron bars of a *rejas* at Castellar. I was never tired of discovering new marvels in this map. There were many Spanish novels with paper covers ornamented with the most tender love scenes, and a fascinating variety of children's books, but so strong was the German influence in newspaper and magazine distribution that a vast quantity of *Adlers* reached him every week, the children's transfers glorified the Nazi soldier and his tank, the geography books showed maps of the New Europe, and a few books even harked back to the last war, like *The Cruise of the 'Emden'*, showing the German captain smiling from the cover.

*The Cruise of the 'Emden'* occupied a prominent place in the window, and the *Adlers* had the best situation on the counter. Too many Nazi agents came prying down the street, and my newsagent was particularly anxious to keep clear of the security police.

A friend in Algeciras, who had read my book *A Farm in Normandy*, asked me one morning if I would like to visit a farm in Andalusia. She said that we would drive out there for lunch in her landau. It was, she said, owned by an old man called Antonio, and although the farm was only a tiny place, he had made it all himself from virgin soil twenty years ago, and he had a little house overlooking the bay across which he could see Algeciras, just as from my farm I was able to look at Le Havre. I gathered that the farmer's wife was related in some way to one of my friend's most faithful servants, who had been with her family for many years, and known her from birth. I was quite enchanted at the idea, which thrilled me much more than if I had been asked to visit the biggest ranch in the province.

We set out just after eleven o'clock on a hot June morning. A tiny breeze from the straits had arrived overnight, to bring relief from weather so tropical that even the Andalusians

themselves were beginning to cry for mercy. Our journey in a well-sprung carriage that had been rescued from oblivion in the family stables, and given a fresh coat of paint, so that it might replace cars that were useless without petrol, was along a narrow white road bordered on the right by the emerald-green waters of the bay that, fanned by the wind, had little white crests. From time to time a Maltese carriage would pass us with much jingling of bells, and if one looked back one could see clouds of white dust made by our two carriages. No wonder that Parisian dressmakers are harking back to the fashions of 1900. The carriage seems to call for the tight waist, the leg-of-mutton sleeve, and the parasol. There were a few pleasant villas facing the sea, one of which was owned by a successful actress in Madrid. But mostly we drove past low white huts into which one could get occasional glimpses—a barber shaving a client, a woman buying a broom in a little general store, a fisherman inspecting his pets . . . and the air was so clear between cool water and violet mountain that I had memories of a similar drive along Phaleron Bay, between the Acropolis and Piraeus.

We left the carriage by a little gate on the roadside, and walked along a path between corn in the cob, the beards of which were beginning to brown, showing that within a week or two they would be good for eating. The house was in the middle of the property. The door of the living-room opened on an arbour covered with vine, and from the leafy roof there hung big clusters of muscatel grapes, still green and hard, but so full of promise that they made my mouth water. There was a kitchen table of deal in the middle of the arbour, on which stood two magnificent begonias in pots, and round the arbour, the floor of which was gravel, were superb carnations and red-pepper plants and roses. The door of the living-room was the front door of the house, and this door was made of Shell-Mex petrol tins beaten out flat, nailed to a wood frame, and painted black. I knew from this that the farmer had built the house himself.

There was nobody in the living-room, but as my friend entered in her cool print dress and wide-brimmed straw hat,

to call Antonio or his wife, I remained behind a moment, not yet being known to the family. Although the living-room was not large, it had four doors, and they were all wide open—the one that led to the harbour, the one opposite through which my friend had passed, that led to the kitchen and out into the fields again, another door leading to the best bedroom, with a huge four-post bed covered over with a mosquito net, and the fourth door leading to another bedroom, much less grand, and which, I imagined, was either for a servant or for any relation who cared to spend the night. Much excited welcome now issued from the kitchen, and it was clear that my friend was being made a great fuss of, and within a few moments I came in for just as much. The farmer's wife was small, with what was left of her grey hair tied up in a bun, and she walked with difficulty, suffering from rheumatism, which had become worse of late because the house, though perfect in summer, was not quite well enough built to resist the damp fogs that came up from the sea, and the heavy rains of autumn. She took our things and inquired about the carriage, and dispatched us into the garden with Antonio, in order to finish cooking our lunch, for it was obvious that our visit was a big occasion.

Antonio had a square face, and moustaches that were not yet so white as the tufts of thick hair that fell on his forehead from under his cap. He was in his shirt sleeves, but he wore a waistcoat, and his trousers were of the type that seems to delight farmers, both in Spain and France, for they were grey with black stripes. I took an instant liking to him, for though not particularly loquacious, he was jovial, and I knew that we should make him warm up. He led us out by the back door to see the cows.

He had built his cow shed just behind his house, and it had a bamboo roof. It was admirably clean and strewn with hay. On one side three cows, on the other side two cow calves, and in a compartment by themselves two bull calves. Now you may wonder what they were doing in the shed at this hour of the day, but Antonio milked his cows at eight o'clock in the evening, after which he put them out in a field until

seven o'clock in the morning, when he brought them back to the shed for milking and to remain all day. He said the heat was too great to keep the cows out, but I suspect that his grazing was limited.

We were introduced. Reina Vitoria was seven years old, and she was producing twenty litres a day. Her daughters were Marquesa, one year old, and Duquesa, three months old, who both sidled up to me, wondering whether I was hiding something in my hand. Reina Vitoria was in calf again.

Carsetera was four years old, and Antonio said he called her that because her legs were white, and in the old days Spanish peasants used to wear white leggings called by that name. She was producing sixteen litres a day, like her three-year-old companion, Peregrina, which is Spanish for a pilgrim, 'and,' said Antonio 'pilgrims are always kneeling, and so did Peregrina when she came into the world. She was a bit weak on her front legs!'

The elder bull calf was two years old, and was called Reyes, because he was born on the Day of the Kings. The younger one was only three months.

Opposite the cow shed Antonio had sunk a well, which produced crystal-clear water by a hand pump. From there we went through more corn in the cob waving in the breeze, some potatoes, and some land laid out with French beans to the field where he put his cows for the night. The grass was rather coarse, and there was only about an acre of it. Further on there were some fine fig-trees already laden with fruit, that would be ripe in about a month's time, and Antonio spied a fat cricket that he carried off in triumph to his chicks. There was a sow with a very pointed snout, which had just produced a litter of seven piglets, and there was just enough wheat for the farmer to make his own bread as soon as he had received permission from the authorities to build an oven. He would take the grain to a water mill at San Roque, for he had no faith in electric mills, not being sure that he would be handed back his own flour.

Antonio cut us each a rose with his jackknife, and led us

back to the house, where lunch was served on a large white cloth in the living-room. On the wall hung a faded photograph of our farmer as a young man wearing a stiff white collar, a black satin tie, and enormous moustaches. It must have been taken at the time of his marriage, for a photograph of his wife hung on the opposite wall. The view through the open door into the harbour was completely restful. One saw the blue sea of the bay, and Algeciras, in all its dazzling whiteness, in the distance. The farmer's wife brought us in a bowl of Spanish soup and a loaf of bread about six inches long, and so heavy that one would have said that it was made of lead. Antonio, who had been pacing up and down rather nervously, not knowing whether he should remain with us or return to his estate, noticing his bread, took it up, weighed it in his hands, and threw it down on the table.

'Fancy,' he exclaimed. 'Fancy growing good wheat for the Germans, and being given this terrible stuff in return.'

I looked at him a trifle nervously, wondering what this outburst was going to lead up to, and he went on: 'Yes, I shall try to make my own bread—just enough for the house, but shall I get permission to build the oven? You see that open space between the end of my property and the road? I had planned to build a little inn there, and I had obtained delivery of all the bricks and cement that I needed. A year ago the authorities came and took all my bricks and cement—requisitioned them.'

'What are you selling your milk for now?' asked my friend.

Antonio took a pull at his pipe and said: 'Before the civil war milk sold at eighty cents a litre. To-day the Government has fixed the price at 1.20 pesetas, but it sells at three pesetas in the black market, and I sell mine at 2.25 pesetas.'

He added:

'They take everything from us. Thus for every kilo of potato seed we buy we are supposed to return three of potatoes, and we must declare our fowls, and not kill any animal without Government permission. Each farmer makes



a return to the authorities at Cadiz, in which province we fall, and when these returns are tabulated we are advised of the price that will be paid for our produce, but we are allowed to keep sufficient for our own household needs, so that my aim is to produce nothing in excess of that—except in the case of milk, which pays for the expenses of the farm. I don't see why I should work to send food to Germany.'

'How much is a cow worth, Antonio?'

'I was offered five thousand pesetas for Carsetera, who is four years old, but I might even get up to ten thousand. Before the war she would have been worth a thousand. You see, many farmers have no longer any faith in the currency, and prices are rather wild. At Seville the other day a thoroughbred donkey, which would have been worth two hundred pesetas before the civil war, sold for eleven thousand pesetas, and even an ordinary donkey worth one hundred pesetas before the war would cost you two thousand now. A sow costs four hundred pesetas.'

'Then the farmer has a valuable stock?'

'Yes, if you will. When I bought this virgin land twenty years ago it cost me twenty thousand pesetas, and to-day, as it stands, it is worth one hundred thousand, but the taxes are very high, and now they are talking about a tax on cows.'

'Do you sell your flowers, Antonio?'

'Not now. There is no longer any market as there used to be when there were women in Gibraltar.'

His wife came in with two plates of fried eggs and chips. 'Eggs from our hens,' she declared. 'We don't need to declare those—only the fowls.'

How much there was in common between these farmers and my own in Normandy! What a lovable sly dog this Antonio must be when one got to know him, and I wonder how much his wife runs the house. And this room with its whitewashed walls, and the 1900 gramophone with the huge trumpet, and the sewing-machine, and the shot-gun over the beams! But Mme Antonio had certainly made us a fine meal, and her salad of red onion and tomato, cut up fine, with just the right amount of oil and vinegar, was quite delicious,

and so were the goat's cheese and the coffee, which I was tempted to believe really came from Santos.

After lunch we went out into the fields again, where four men were working in the distance by the bamboo bushes. They were the farmer's labourers, and he paid them eleven pesetas a day, but whereas until a year ago he had fed them, things were too difficult now, and they were obliged to bring their own food. I think I have never seen so much grown in so small a space as on this farm and, helped by the sun, everything looked remarkably robust. We inspected the hens and the little chicks, and then the beehives, for Antonio was a man who believed in having everything that a farm is capable of producing.

A mongrel was tied by a long chain to the trunk of an olive-tree, and, at our approach, woke from his afternoon sleep and barked furiously, running round in circles as wide as his chain would permit. He had a small kennel, painted green, at the foot of the tree. All round the house Antonio had plated date palms in tall kerosene drums, which he had painted white. Knowing how short Spaniards are of potatoes I pointed to his fine little crop, and suggested that in this, at least, he was lucky not to live in the town, and I could see that he was flattered in spite of his natural unwillingness to admit that farming has its advantages. 'The Government price is sixty cents a kilo,' he remarked dryly. 'In the black market they are sold at five pesetas.'

This black market in Spain looms like an evil thing, spreading itself over the entire national life, and it has grown to such immense proportions that its roots are too thick and widespread to cut. Antonio said that the Government had fixed prices too low to be economical. People in the cities say that the system benefits the wealthy, who are more pro-Axis than the masses. But it was too lovely a day to talk of these things and, having satisfied the watch-dog that we were friends, we patted him on the head and passed again into the arbour, where Antonio gave us half a dozen of his most beautiful carnations to take back to Algeciras. He asked us to come and see him again, and added: 'You know that I

have also a little place fifty miles inland, which I bought a year ago, because one never knows what might happen, living so near to the Rock.'

The Rock? Why, yes, I had forgotten all about it, but looking in the direction in which he was pointing I caught sight of its sheer magnificence looming in the distance.

'You understand,' the wily old peasant went on, as if talking to himself. 'There might be a spot of trouble one day, so I bought that other place as a "funk-hole."' "

THE ferry boat that goes across the bay from Algeciras to Gibraltar is captained by an old Spanish sea-dog, who wears a white linen suit too large for his bony frame, a yachting cap, and brown shoes. The stub-end of a dead cigarette remains fastened to his upper lip during the thirty odd minutes that the journey takes. In the early morning the steamer is filled with Spaniards, who go over to work each day in the dockyard, returning before nightfall with a loaf of white bread and a quarter of a pound of sugar, and once or twice a week they may take home a ration of tobacco. A few women also go over on this boat to prepare early morning cups of tea for the inhabitants of this fortress town, which between dusk and dawn is mainly a stronghold of males. The view from this little ship in the rosy dawn is as beautiful as anything it is possible to imagine. Schools of porpoises romp and play all round the vessel, their giant fins heeling out of the water. A few fluffy clouds, that will presently lift, hang above the mountains behind Algeciras, and San Roque sleeps peacefully on rugged clefts. The white houses of Ceuta, on the opposite coast, are beginning to turn a delicate pink below the towering Monte Hacho, and the Spaniards will tell you that in past ages the two continents were connected, because the geological formations of Gibraltar and of northern Africa are of limestone, while the mountains on the Spanish mainland are of sandstone. An old man, whose face has become brown and wrinkled by the ardour of successive summer suns, asks me if I can really see the difference, and I answer politely that it really does look as if a mountain range has become broken, with part of it disappearing into the sea. A smile spreads over his features, as if discovering that I was more intelligent than he took me for, and as if to clinch his theory he adds that the monkeys of Gibraltar are Barbary apes, and that the Barbary partridge is found on the Rock, but not in Spain.

Our little steamer put in at a jetty almost exactly opposite La Linea, from where a steady flow of Spaniards, far more than from Algeciras, flow into the Rock each morning. The workmen and the older women arrive first, and then the younger women and the shop-girls, some of them with bewitching eyes that, for all their softness, are quite capable of flashing steel in this town, where the other sex is in such a majority.

The military policeman at the iron gate at the jetty wears a khaki shirt and shorts. All the soldiers in the garrison, from major-general to private, are dressed alike, and the only way to discover their rank is to look at their shoulders. The Air Force are also in khaki, but the Navy wear white. Such an exhibition of hairy knees is a little disconcerting at first for anybody coming from a country which is no less hot but where people dress normally, but one has only to look at some of those sinewy arms and necks burned a dark chocolate to realize just how healthy it is for them.

Gibraltar's Main Street runs in a more or less straight line from Market Square. There is none of the blinding whiteness of the Spanish town. Main Street is a dirty brown, with a faintly Victorian heaviness, in spite of its verandas and porticos, and the eucalyptus-trees that give shade. Heavy lorries, motor cars, and an occasional Bren gun carrier rumble along, keeping up a groan of metal from which only the shriek of the horns is absent, and to replace it army drivers bang the palms of their hands on the sides of their vehicles. There are a few Maltese carriages and push-carts filled with lemons, brought by the Spaniards from La Linea, and just once in a while you will see a horse and cart bringing in hay for fodder. To anybody who has come from Europe the shops are full of surprises. They are both very rich and very poor; and are unlike those in any other town in Europe. You can see more bars of chocolate than it would appear possible for a well-fed garrison to be able to consume, and the London civilian gapes at this prodigality. English cigarettes, costing only two shillings for fifty instead of five shillings, as at home, are stacked ceiling-high at the tobacconists'. Bananas

cost twopence halfpenny each, and there are oranges, lemons, black figs, and large Victoria plums. There are branches of the great Indian stores from Calcutta and Bombay, that before the war did a roaring trade with the cruise ships and ocean-going liners of every nationality continually putting into port. So profitable was this trade that the owners of these stores actually made Gibraltar their home. Their wives lived with them, and wore sarees in the street, and many employed eight or nine Indians to serve behind the counter. A few had branches also in Tangier. They sold ivory work and French perfumes, lipsticks, and eau-de-Cologne. Only one Indian remains in each shop now, and the stocks have dwindled, though some still have a surprising amount of French perfumes, which the soldiers buy to send home to their wives and sweethearts. There are a few drapery stores, where multi-coloured lingerie in poor artificial silk hangs on paper dummies, with a few cotton dresses and some pseudo-Spanish shawls and imitation mantillas. There are stationers' shops, where the troops buy air-mail paper and the officers buy cheap novels. The British newspapers arrive six weeks late, and the limited number of weeklies are snapped up by the officers' messes. One is mildly surprised at the amount that a woman can still buy in this male stronghold, though Europe is rapidly coming to the stage when it will be all make-up and no clothes. The men are forbidden to buy silk stockings to send home, and this rule leaves a rapidly diminishing stock for the few women buyers. Many of the shops are closed, and cobwebs hang over the doors unless the accommodation has been taken over by the military. A wealthy Moor had a curiosity shop, but he thought it wiser to retire at the outbreak of war, and spend the last years of his life peacefully in North Africa. A firm of saddle-makers was closed when polo came to an end, and it is now trading between La Linea and Gibraltar on behalf of the Government.

Many present-day Gibraltarians are of Genoese descent, and some are very wealthy. A few are of vague French descent, like the watchmaker who has to close his shop three days a week to work on the orders he has taken for repairs during

the other three, for labour is very short, and whereas he had many workmen before the war, he is now all alone. Hairdressers from La Linea arrive in the morning to open their shops where, unable to converse with the British Tommy, they silently shave his hair to the requisite height at the back of his head for ninepence. A few naval outfitters from Chatham or Devonport still carry on business, as they probably do also at Malta; there are cafés where soldiers and sailors congregate in the evening to listen to a ladies' orchestra, and the Café Universal says: 'We will supply drinks free to all on Victory Day, so keep smiling, but to supply these drinks please avoid glass-breaking, as replacements are difficult.'

Once a week at eleven o'clock in the morning the sirens sound for half an hour's gas-mask drill, when every soldier must carry on his work wearing this terrifying appendage, and even the police on point duty direct traffic looking like prehistoric apes. I even saw a Spanish costermonger stop selling a banana to a passing girl to put his on. It is the noisiest street in the world—it is a strident symphony of pounding lorries, aeroplane engines overhead, great shaking roars as the sappers excavating up in the rock explode a dozen sticks of gelignite; and, as evening comes, the heavy tread of a seething mass of sailors and soldiers and airmen wearing out the macadam in the street as they sing *Auld Lang Syne* or *Roll out the Barrel*. It is a dusty street because of the wind that blows through it from the sea. The pavements are littered with cigarette boxes and chocolate wrapping, and every night it looks like Southend after a bank holiday. The Gibraltarians, who must pay women from Spain to make their beds and to cook their meals, queue up at the post office to send registered air-mail letters to their wives and sweethearts in distant lands. English currency notes have been withdrawn from the Rock for the same reason that they are not recognized by the Treasury in neutral Europe. They are replaced by Gibraltar notes, but our silver is accepted. Until the Spanish civil war the peseta and the pound were both legal tender, and the shopkeepers kept their accounts in the two moneys. In those days the

soldiery were not much in evidence, and after lunch officers could walk about town in civilian clothes, and anybody who wished could cross to Spain, just as if there was no frontier. When Main Street was crowded it was due to the passengers from cruise liners and transatlantic ships. Market Square then justified its name. Meat came from Barbary, the Argentine, and Australia, and oranges, musk-melons, figs, and muscatels from Andalusia. Moors in turbans and caftans, seated cross-legged at their stalls, sold fowls, eggs, and basket-work, and it was still as it had been since Sala wrote in the eighties: 'British artillerymen and linesmen, spruce orderly sergeants, and dandy officers in mufti; "girls of the period," and Spanish peasant and flower girls; Jews in high black caps and low black caps, or with yellow kerchiefs twisted round their heads, in gaberdines trimmed with cat-skin, in long dressing-gowns of chintz, or girt with heavy sashes of ragged red stuff; Moors of Morocco in turbans white and green, in caftans and baggy creels, with faces now swart as Ethiopians, now white and red as Saxons, but scowling always at the Giaour; Arabs of Algeria in snow-white burnouses or braid of dark camel's hair—smiling, affable, complaisant Moslems these, their French masters having taught them manners; fishermen from Cadiz or Tarifa; English, American, and Spanish sailors; loafers and rapscallions from Genoa, Malta, or Leghorn; with here and there an Indian Ajah, just landed from a P. & O. steamer; a very raw curate, newly appointed to an Indian chaplaincy, and a wondering British tourist in a check tweed travelling suit and a white umbrella lined with green under one arm and "Murray" under the other—this is Main Street.'

The international crowd has gone, although the Gibraltarians themselves are of mixed origin, becoming native to the Rock by a process of assimilation under the British flag. They speak the same language as the Spaniards who so proudly left Gibraltar in 1704, but there is very little Spanish blood in them unless occasionally when a British Tommy has married a girl from Spain, and the children have been brought up as Gibraltarians; for there is a say-



ing that when these mixed marriages occur the wives bring back the husbands to live under the Mediterranean sun, their wills being stronger than those of our own race. But nowadays such marriages are frowned on, and when they happen the wife is packed off to England, where she will have to remain until the end of the war. But if Main Street misses the Jews and the Arabs and the Moors, there is something very virile in its jostling crowds of clean-shaven young Englishmen. If some of the sailors become merry at the end of a hot summer's day, remember they may have been heroes less than twenty-four hours earlier, for the German dive-bomber haunts the Mediterranean waters.

Main Street means a little shop-gazing and a beer at a local tavern, where the orchestra splits your ear-drums. It means the telegraph office and the registered mail counter; the policeman in Commercial Square dressed in traditional blue with long trousers and in a pre-war London helmet; the field post office in College Lane; Government House, where you mustn't walk under the portico, though it takes up all the pavement; it means Barclays Bank in Irish Town, which is the only English bank in Gibraltar; Naafi on the right up Library Street, and the library itself against the background of the Rock, with the huge palm and the venerable dragon-tree in the garden in front, the big cool rooms, with leather arm-chairs and books to the ceilings, and the latest copy of *The Times* that arrives by air mail, and the weekly picture papers that arrive six weeks late by sea mail, and the novels and the thrillers, and the cool garden behind with bougainvillaeas growing over trellis-work to keep the sun from those who wish to read in the open air. Beyond lies Government House, where the sentry wears shorts and a tropical helmet and a couple of murderous-looking Mills bombs in his belt. Main Street means some more eucalyptus-trees and the cheap open-air restaurant in a white courtyard, with vines growing over it, where savoury liver costs five-pence, cold ham and tomato tenpence, green peas fivepence, baked potatoes twopence, and a fruit jelly threepence; and then come the garrison theatre, and the naval picket house,

and South Port Gate, where an old man with a barrowful of fruit sells bananas and oranges, just as they were sold from barrows in Commercial Road before these things became but a memory in London town.

If you pass through South Port Gate you will find a sunken garden on your right, and the Trafalgar Cemetery on your left, which is the resting-place of the victims of the great yellow fever epidemic in 1804, many tombstones bearing the names of young officers in their very early twenties, and this is where the road forks, one branch leading down to the dock-yard, and the other climbing up the Rock, past the Rock Hotel, built against its flank, above the Alameda Gardens and the barracks square, a reminder of the days when wealthy people visited Gibraltar for a night or two during luxury cruises on fine white liners. The Rock Hotel is one of the most beautiful in Europe, and seems a little out of place in a fortress, where austerity is synonymous with security. The hotel is a long three-storied building, with bays and a flat roof, and two sturdy white flagpoles. The façade is camouflaged with painted tree trunks, but it retains a natural lightness because of its verandas and green window shutters. It is reached from the road by steps or by a steep ramp, and mignonette and jasmine climb all over its terraces, and the gardens are filled with geraniums and roses and carnations.

Idle chatter and feminine laughter have disappeared from its hall, and the springs of the chintz arm-chairs in the ladies' salon have been broken by muscular officers who let the whole weight of their bodies sink into them to rest weary limbs after a hard climb up the road. It is an hotel where there is never an empty room, and where you must have authority from the right quarter to take up residence or even spend a night, and where a woman guest makes quite a sensation amongst its clientele of naval, air force, and military officers; but when one is lucky enough to gain admittance the atmosphere is almost club-like, and the view enchanting. Most of the rooms have balconies, on which you may sit after dinner watching the great ships in harbour, and the little ships fussing round them, and aeroplanes roaring over the mole

while the sun is sinking behind Algeciras. This scene is ever changing, and moves as rapidly as a film, and it is laid out for one's benefit at the feet of the exotic Alameda Gardens, from which, in spite of dockyard smoke, comes the sweet perfume of mimosa. You may see anything here—sometimes it is a battleship, or an aircraft carrier, or a submarine, or a transport that has just come from home; or all these wonders may be in harbour at the same time. As soon as it is dark Algeciras blazes like fairyland, and often you may see a dark red glow in the forests where woodmen are making charcoal.

My room was small, but it had what the *bôteliers* like to call every modern comfort, and its cream-coloured walls and gay chintz curtains gave an illusion of coolness during the heat of the day. There was a little black-and-ochre table, which also made a writing desk, and on which the Spanish housekeeper each morning deposited a huge bowl of flowers she had herself cut in the gardens before breakfast. She brought them in with a gracious good morning, teaching me the names of those flowers I did not know, for, besides the mimosa and the jasmine, the roses and the carnations and the heliotrope and the wistaria, there were the pink or white oleanders, with dark green narrow-pointed leaves. There was the hibiscus, that looks like a dancing girl wearing a flaming red dress—a red that is so vivid, and yet so perfectly lovely that only nature can paint it, a red that makes you gasp in astonishment and admiration and envy that no satin can imitate it, and rising from the centre of the five large petals and surpassing them by nearly an inch is the body of the dancer, with her head and corsage of gold shimmering from unseen threads. There was the pomegranate also, that at this moment was in the process of turning from flower to fruit. The five tiny pink petals with a heart of gold grow out of a red bowl that soon turns brown, swells, and becomes the fruit. These flowers made a garden of my room, but by evening they were dead, and it seemed as if the heat stifled them indoors. My bed was not one of those ugly things of iron, but a small divan, with a Basque linen cover, and there were mirrors and cupboards in plenty, and the

sight of the bay with its stupendous activity was the most priceless picture in the room. There were noises it took time to get accustomed to—great explosions that were either gun-fire or blasting, I was never sure which, though they might have been due to both. There were the guns that fired at targets towed by aeroplanes, and there were aeroplanes that dropped shells in the sea, making little water-spouts where they exploded. There was the continual roar of heavy traffic up and down the mountain road. Occasionally one saw a couple of Tommies leading a donkey along to make a comic contrast with heavy six-wheel lorries.

The whole hotel faced the bay, for it had its back to the Rock. From every angle one looked there were views of gardens and distant sweeps of water and mountain. The dining-room filled with sunshine, and the bar, that was perhaps the busiest spot in the hotel, opened out on the terrace, where people took their drinks in the evening, or moved into the library, where there were some leather arm-chairs, to listen to the news from London at six o'clock and at eight-fifteen. Sometimes a convoy, to which the announcer in London referred with such devastating caution, had been shepherded safely to its destination by some of the bearded men in white shorts, who sipped their iced drinks with a blasé look. The library was down to about thirty books, and was rather 1900, with novels about ladies in tight waists and hobble skirts, and some classics like Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey*. The Air Force officers read a lot, but several confided to me that they neither looked at the title nor at the name of the author, so that they frequently took out the same book twice, not knowing they had read it a week earlier. They had nothing but contempt for authors; an attitude which I was never able to reconcile with their voracious appetite for new books to read. There were no riotous evenings at the Rock Hotel. All would be quiet by 11 p.m., but in the morning when one looked out of the windows great warships might have glided quietly out of harbour, or others come in.

History might well have been written overnight.

SUNSHINE streamed through the french windows of the drawing-room, where the arm-chairs and sofas were covered in cretonne, and where ferns in garden pots stood on wrought-iron stands of Spanish design. The heat was so great that the white stone balustrade on the terrace shimmered under the burning rays. A piano was emitting noisy guffaws, and from a window on the first floor came the sound of jazz from a gramophone. It was a few minutes before seven, on a Saturday evening.

The drawing-room was empty except for a couple of officers in shorts and open-necked khaki shirts lolling in the arm-chairs. Through a break in the curtain that divided the drawing-room from the lounge the Spanish waiters could be seen clearing away the tea-things and dusting the little round tables and wicker arm-chairs. Rumbo, the sleek-haired, stocky head porter, climbed the eight stairs that led from the hotel entrance to the foyer and surveyed the scene with a sheaf of papers in his hand, and apparently not finding the person he was looking for, turned left into the dining-room, where dinner would not be served for another half-hour.

Saturday night was no ordinary night at the Rock Hotel. There were women guests at dinner, for the dance that took place later on the terrace. This feminine element that invaded the hotel once a week were mostly recruited from the W.R.N.S. and the nursing staff of the military hospital. They came in evening dresses of pale blue and pink satin. They carried their bead-covered handbags as if they had almost forgotten how to use them, and their necks and arms were very sunburned.

The officers even entertained amongst themselves at the Rock Hotel on a Saturday evening. The more important executives from Government House occasionally looked in.

The two officers rose from the cretonne-covered arm-chairs in the lounge, glanced at the clock above the ferns on the

Spanish wrought-iron stands, and hurried across the thick carpet to the corridor to change for dinner. A low drone of voices could now be heard from the bar at the end of the corridor where Charles, the Gibraltarian barman, who had once worked at Seville, was dispensing gin and lime to his clients sitting up on the high stools. The first women guests arrived with ripples of feminine laughter. In a corner of the bar, by the terrace, sat a group of young R.A.F. pilots, including one belonging to the Eagle Squadron from Malta. Officers from some of the gun-posts up on the Rock had come down for a drink before dinner because it was Saturday night, and there were the American, French, and Belgian liaison officers with their staffs, and a Polish naval officer, whose boyish looks belied his toughness.

By the clock that Charles the barman had fixed between the bottles of whisky, gin, and sherry on the shelves in the bar, it was now seven-twenty. From the adjoining 'library,' where the radio set was nailed to the wall, came a voice giving a talk from London. The sun still beat down mercilessly on the balustrade of the terrace where, in spite of the awning, it was still too hot to sit in comfort.

A few naval officers came in with bandaged arms and an unquenchable desire for pink gin. Out in the harbour, powerful grey battleships were silhouetted against the mole. They had come to-day and would be gone to-morrow. But some of them had been in action, and the air was tense.

Nobody talked about the battleships, or asked their names. Nobody passed any remark about the commander's limp or the lieutenant's bandaged arm. Charles continued to be very busy serving gin, and the officers from a gun-site up on the Rock, who had fired a warning shot over the bows of a merchant vessel when she had come in too close in the bay that afternoon, wondered when they would get back to England for a spot of leave. The big hand of the clock behind Charles's back approached the hour, and a few people filed into the 'library' next door. It was a small room, with yellow painted walls, a leather sofa, half a dozen strangely assorted chairs, and two large doors leading out on the

terrace. The loud-speaker was fastened to a wall, and an R.A.F. officer was writing a letter home at the only table. At the stroke of the hour half a dozen men came in from the bar with their glasses in their hands. The piano tuner was still at work in the adjoining room.

When the announcer had read out the main items of news the company moved out into the corridor on its way to the dining-room. A stream of visitors was coming up the steps leading from the hotel entrance to the foyer, and Rumbo's office had been turned into a cloak-room, and it was filled with officers' caps and swagger-sticks. When officers left their caps in the lounge it was not unusual for them to disappear mysteriously. Some people said that the caps were smuggled into Spain, where German agents bought them for the classical coup of dressing Germans as Englishmen. Cars climbed the steep ramp leading to the hotel, deposited their passengers, and went off gingerly down the precipitous incline leading to the road. Visitors who had come up from the town on foot wiped the sweat from their brows as they reached the foyer. The sun was still ferociously hot.

The foyer was now filled with people, and the manager, who was the only man in a black dinner-jacket (he wore a pink carnation with a green spray in his buttonhole), was aware that all the previous records for a Saturday night at the Rock Hotel would probably, indeed certainly, be beaten by the end of the night. Bottles of gin were being emptied at a prodigious speed, and every table in the restaurant was occupied. The manager had decorated the tables with bougainvilleae, the only flower still to be found in the gardens, which were now drying up at the end of a long hot summer.

The menu was rather more copious than usual, and ended with ices and melon, but the cold water was not really more than tepid in the glasses because the refrigerators no longer functioned. But the bread was still white at the close of the third year of war.

After dinner, coffee was served in the foyer. The waiters brought large silver coffee pots and saucers and cups, and plenty of white sugar, and placed these things on a sideboard

at the top of the stairs leading from the front entrance. Guests served themselves and then, holding their cups and saucers, formed groups sitting down in the wicker chairs round the glass-topped tables.

The sailors who limped or whose arms were bandaged gathered together. Many of them were not correctly clothed according to naval regulations. People were rather wary of approaching them for fear of seeming indiscreet. The manager (in his black dinner-jacket with the carnation and the wisp of green) hurried down the stairs to welcome new arrivals. Rooms had been reserved for these men, who seemed to be led by a thickset man with a New Jersey accent, who wore black shoes, white stockings, shorts, and a lifebelt. The new guests had no luggage.

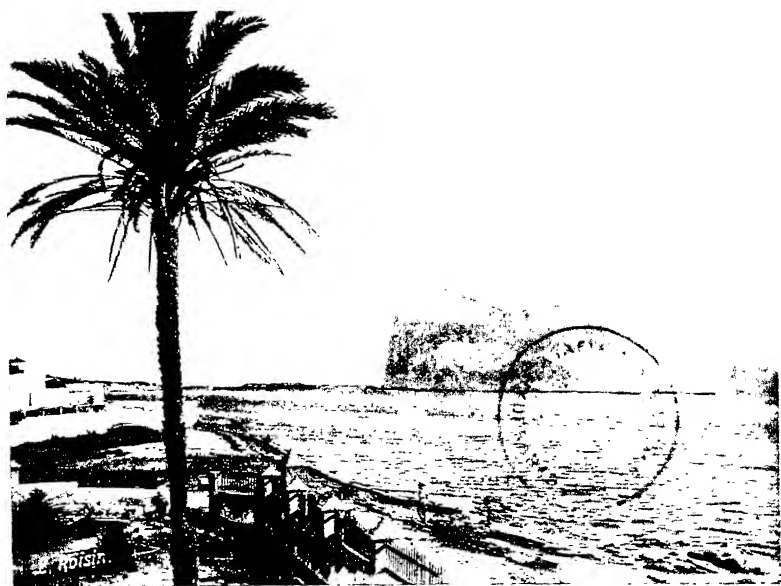
The gramophone in the lounge was set in motion by Rumbo, and people made off in the direction of the terrace, where dancing would shortly begin.

The task of setting the gramophone going on a Saturday evening belonged exclusively to Rumbo, who was the most intelligent porter on the Rock, with a knowledge of everything interesting on both sides of the frontier. Rumbo could conjure up Egyptian pounds at midnight, and tell you the name of every shop in La Linea de la Concepcion and at Algeciras.

The electric gramophone seldom indulged in complicated tunes. It confined itself to fox-trots and an occasional waltz, probably because the dancers were not always very expert. As the evening wore on, however, and as the bar did increasing business, the dancers became more enthusiastic, if not more expert, and the terrace more crowded. The sun had now come to the end of its course, and was disappearing in a big ball of flame behind the mountains of Spain, where the charcoal burners were beginning their fires that by night would glow in the cork forests.

An R.A.F. officer in blue uniform hurried into the foyer, and this sight was sufficiently unusual for people to look up at him, for it showed that he was leaving the Rock. He carried a dispatch case under his arm, and whispered in my ear: 'If you would like to send a lemon and a banana back





*The Rock from La Linea*





to your baby in London, I'll see he gets it for lunch to-morrow.' I picked my way out through the crowd to Rumbo, who was back in his office at the bottom of the stairs, and he went off into the kitchen to get the fruit.

The foyer was becoming rather noisy, and now and again one picked up a sentence in rich Virginian, in Belgian, in French, or in Dutch. It looked rather like the hall of the Regent Palace Hotel on a Saturday night.

A lorry climbed up the ramp, came to a noisy standstill at the front entrance of the hotel, a tall figure in air force blue ran down the stairs. He waved farewell, and was gone into the night.

The terrace was quieter because it was too dark to dance, and there was a partial black-out. That is to say that our hotel was not supposed to shower its gaiety over the harbour. At the end of the terrace (its highest point, where the swings told of days when children stayed there) a naval surgeon and an army doctor was pacing up and down pulling thoughtfully at their pipes.

The sight from the terrace was entrancing. The lights of Algeciras looked like some gigantic fun-fair because the Spaniards want enemy airmen to recognize their neutrality from as far away as possible. So Algeciras radiated light, casting shadows against the mountains behind it and the purple water of the bay in front of it. The lighthouses of Punta Carnero in Spain and of Malabata at the entrance of the bay of Tangier in North Africa winked in the bright moonlight that floodlit the whole scene.

It was a night for romance and gentle voices. The great battleships in the bay seemed unreal and rather small. A light no larger than a star sped across the bay. Was this the bomber bound for London? No, the light disappeared, the aircraft banked and showed a red light. It was probably on patrol. Then another light shot across the bay, nearer to Algeciras, and this time it sped over Punta Carnero. This was the aircraft I had been looking for. Good night, my pet, you'll have dessert for lunch to-morrow.

I DECIDED to go back to Algeciras by way of La Linea and San Roque. Gibraltar is joined to the Spanish coast by a strip of sandy soil about ten feet above the level of the sea which, because of the number of sea-shells found in it, was, at one time, probably under water. A trim and well-kept road bordered with trees leads past our advance line of sentries to the barren neutral ground at the end of which a great stone gateway indicated the Spanish passport control and custom-house at the entrance to the town of La Linea de la Concepcion. The road along this causeway is now extremely active, for not only have we found a new use for this flat ground on our side, but the Spaniards have erected powerful fortifications on theirs, each encroaching a little on what was no man's land. It was from La Linea that the French and Spaniards started the great siege of Gibraltar, which lasted from the summer of 1779 until March 1783. The disturbances in the British colonies in America had revived the hopes of the Spanish court, which still brooded over the loss of Gibraltar, and France then being allied with Spain, the Spanish and French armies were placed under the command of the Duc de Crillon. In the spring of 1782 Gibraltar was bombarded by sea and by land, but the enemy was defeated, and countless thousands of spectators who covered the enemy's camp and the surrounding hills, and who had hurried from all parts of Spain to witness the fall of the Rock, returned to their homes disappointed and chagrined. The Comte d'Artois, brother of Louis XVI, who eventually reigned himself as Charles X, and the Duc de Bourbon were in the Spanish camp at this time. On the termination of the siege General Eliott, the Governor of Gibraltar, and the Duc de Crillon met amicably on the neutral ground half-way across the causeway. That was the last occasion on which an attempt was made to recover Gibraltar. A large portion of the population of La Linea now works on the Rock,

and crosses the causeway each morning to return at night.

Friends with whom I was returning to Algeciras suggested that we should walk from La Linea to San Roque, where we could take a carriage to complete our journey. We set out on a Sunday morning, and we had made arrangements with an innkeeper half-way to prepare us a meal towards two o'clock. It was a hot morning, with not the smallest cloud in the sky, and the sun growing in strength. We passed through the market to the Plaza de Farinia. Tall date palms grow around the flower beds in the centre of the square, and the surrounding houses are squat and blinding white. In a corner, beside a low wall of mosaic, stood the inevitable wooden horse which is part of the equipment of the Spanish photographer who plies his trade in public gardens, for his young clients like to be portrayed on horseback. This square was very peaceful, with its beautiful wrought-iron lamps on red-tiled stands, and its view of the nearby church that during the civil war was ransacked, its ornaments being burned. From here we struck the main road that for rather more than a mile runs along the bay, a slight parapet leading down to the deep-blue water where the fishing smacks lie at anchor, and on the other side of which the Rock rises perpendicular. Turning inland we passed through the sleepy village of Campamento, where a portion of the Spanish armies camped during the great siege, but where now the walls of the houses are hidden by masses of bougainvillaea.

We came on to the open road, tarred, but dusty from the dry earth on either side. Arid downland, upon which grazed a few sheep and goats in mixed flocks, swept away on our right to the summit of the high hill, the Sierra Carbonera, where stands the Queen of Spain's Chair. Legend has it that when the French and Spanish troops were besieging Gibraltar the Queen of Spain took her seat there, and vowed she would never move from the spot until she saw the Spanish flag waving over Gibraltar. She might have sat there for ever had it not been for the mercy and gallantry of the English governor who, having heard of the royal vow, caused the Spanish

standard to be waved over the ramparts, thus releasing Her Majesty. Unfortunately historians do not accept this colourful story.

How quiet has this road become since the disappearance of the motor car! There were wild blackberries on the side of the road, amongst which grew fig-trees and cactuses. An old peasant passed along followed by six donkeys laden with charcoal from the hills, packed in straw baskets nicely balanced over the backs of the animals. From time to time one heard the jingle of bells, and a Maltese carriage came along with an entire family of Spaniards packed inside, the wife with a young baby in her arms, and the wizened grandmother in her Sunday best. On the gate-posts of a deserted villa was this election slogan chalked up *before* the civil war: 'Votad á Primo de Rivera. España una grande libre' ('One Spain Great and Free'). A heavy cart rumbled past us, driven by gipsies, and filled with scenic effects from the Algeciras fair, which were now being taken to La Linea, whose turn it was to have a fair next. Here was a long low white building, with a tiled roof—a pottery works, where clay water-urns were being made in the same way as they were made centuries ago; and here we came upon the first shade that had relieved our journey since we set out—a long line of huge eucalyptus-trees; but it was not to last, for soon we were to turn still further inland, with no better protection than an occasional fig-tree, and a sprawling cactus, whose flat green pads are protected by myriads of long wicked needles. The prickly pear, the succulent fruit of the cactus, was already ripe. The downs and the thin straggling wheat fields were alive with cicadas that set up their strident orchestra, and weird grasshoppers sunned themselves on the road, flying away at our approach. Curious beetles with jewelled backs and savage little claws stood firm at our approach, as if prepared to bar the way, and then scurried away at the last moment, and one had the impression that all this *campo*, under a broiling sun, was alive with a million different insects.

From time to time one came upon an inn with a little garden enclosed by evergreens, in which there were flowers,

like an oasis in a sandy desert. It was into one of these inns, just as I was becoming thoroughly exhausted, that my companions led me. It was called 'La Alegría de la Huerta' ('The Happiness of the Farm'). The room we entered was long and low, with rafters and a tiled floor and a bar at one end, where there were numerous bottles in glass cupboards and shining barrels of Del Mérito Jerez. And from the kitchen came a woman with a seven-month-old baby, followed by four other little children, with all the hair shaved, Spanish fashion, to keep them cool in the summer. The innkeeper stood by an open door painting a chair, and he welcomed us as friends, laying down his brush to go over to the bar, where he poured out for us glasses of Malaga muscatel, with which he brought large green olives. He was a good-looking fellow, who had fought for Franco during the civil war. If he had been on the other side he would doubtless not now be owning an inn, for the unmerciful hand of vengeance is falling on all those who opposed Franco, and to have been a freemason is to serve twelve years' hard labour.

The coolness of this inn was delicious after the heat of the *campo*, and the innkeeper's wine was delectable. I went into the kitchen to talk to the man's wife, who was tending her fire while holding her baby in her left arm. The oven was long and low, built of white plaster, with a steel top bordered with wood, and three braziers burning charcoal, which could be fanned by blowing through wide apertures with bellows. Over one of the braziers was a red earthenware bowl, in which she was cooking a plump chicken, with rice from Valencia, and saffron and pimento. The inn was centuries old, and was said to stand on the site of an armoury used by the Phoenicians, and electric light had not yet come that way to replace the old-fashioned oil lamps. Three ragged soldiers shod with felt slippers came in for a drink, but only stayed a moment, and an urchin with frayed and patched trousers and bare feet knocked timidly on the heavy door to ask for a glass of water, which he drank greedily before darting away. The innkeeper's man, who was to serve us at lunch, arrived from San Roque, calling out 'Blessed be God' as he crossed

the threshold to take over his duties, and we were told that the meal would be served to us in a barn on the other side of the inner courtyard.

This courtyard was dry and baked by the sun, for a small line of evergreen trees, under which stood two goats tethered by long chains, was not yet old enough to provide much shade. A man was unloading hay from a donkey, and stretching far away were fields of grass and corn. We were the honoured travellers—the sojourners who could afford to pay for a good meal—and we drank red wine with our chicken, of which there was enough for twice the number, and we were given a salad of raw onions, cucumber, and garlic; and fresh pears, picked from a tree in the courtyard, so that the fruit was still hot from the sun; and before going on our way we were given a drink on the house by the innkeeper, who totted up our bill on the door with chalk. There was another traveller at the bar drinking Malaga wine, and eating olives and salted herrings. He was a cavalry officer, with one eye covered over with a bandage, and his horse was tied to the entrance to the inn, and the animal's head was just inside the doorway. We left him there to tramp our way up the hill, but before many minutes had passed he overtook us at full gallop, leaning right over his horse's head and whipping the animal's flank, and he was on the crest of the hill and out of sight in a cloud of dust within a very short time. A soldier came down the hill, leading a donkey entirely hidden by foliage. 'Vaya usted con Dios!' ('God guide you on your way!') he called out as he approached. We stopped him, and offered him a cigarette, which he accepted like manna from heaven. 'What is that you are carrying back on your donkey?' we asked him. 'It makes soup,' he answered. 'Soup from that foliage?' 'Why, yes,' he answered. 'It's not bad when there's nothing better.'

Here was San Roque, blistering in the savage sun, on top of its rugged hill. The road forked—one side turning left towards Algeciras, the other climbing to the town, and at this fork was a police control, where each traveller had to declare his name and address, and the purpose of his journey, for this



is the custom at the entrance to every town since the Spanish civil war. We offered the guards cigarettes, which they accepted with gratitude, and we passed on our way climbing the cruel hill that leads to the Alameda, where there are stone benches under leafy trees, and a war memorial in front of which are iron gates. On the centre gate is written 'Franco,' and on the other two, 'Hitler' and 'Mussolini.' Giant sun-flowers grow in the garden.

From here a street climbs to the top of the town—a street of lovely houses, through the inner doors of which one may see the most exquisite *patios* with plants and flowers and fountains making cool oases for those who live within. At the top of the street is the church, built by the Spaniards of Gibraltar when they left the Rock after it had been captured by us in 1704. This church bears the same name as the one they left behind them—Santa María la Coronada (St. Mary the Crowned), and in it are to be found the sacred images removed from the church of St. Mary at Gibraltar.

Adjacent to the church is a little square, very cool and beautiful, where stands the town hall, on the door of which we knocked. It was opened by a boy of six or seven, who had painted fierce moustaches on his girl-like cheeks, and a skull and cross-bones on his forehead. He looked at us with surprise, and ran to fetch his mother, the caretaker, who, being told who we were, consented to show us round.

Taking a great bunch of keys she led the way upstairs to the council chamber, over which is written in huge letters: 'Most Noble and Loyal City of San Roque where the City of Gibraltar resides.'

The Spaniards who fled from Gibraltar to found the city of San Roque, considering themselves the representatives of the lost city, acted as a government in exile. In 1716 a special Chief Magistrate or Corregidor was appointed by the Spanish Government, together, as declared in the royal patent, with a council, tribunals, officers, and gentlemen of the city of Gibraltar, and in all public acts the people of San Roque are called and still call themselves 'the inhabitants of Gibraltar residing at San Roque.'

The flag of Gibraltar, brought by the proud fugitives in 1704, is in a glass case in the corner of the council chamber.

The housekeeper, pointing it out to us, said: 'It is kept under lock and key, but the holder is so pro-German that he would not show it to you. He will only show it to Spaniards or to Germans.' She paused for a moment and added: 'I am not like that. My husband and I are kindly disposed to the British.'

It was clear that she was not lying, for she looked us straight in the eyes, and there was an honest smile on her features. 'Come downstairs,' she went on, 'I will show you the room where the records are kept.' We followed her out into the hall, and from an open window we could see the beautiful gardens in the *patio* filled with orange-trees and mimosa, and in the distance was the Queen of Spain's Chair, nearer than we had ever seen it before. The record room had book-cases filled with documents in folders dating back to the first days of exile. A picture of Franco hung above the chief magistrate's chair, and there was a telephone on his desk. There were some fine old prints of the Rock, and some maps on the wall, which I started to admire, when our guide said: 'You will not find the most interesting period maps here. The Germans sent for them the other day, and they have all gone to Berlin.'

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fortress. Side by side with its warlike preparations I remembered strolling through the Alameda Gardens, heavy with the scent of tropical flowers and plants under a grilling afternoon sun, suddenly to come upon a private (in shorts) armed with a butterfly net! He was a most gentle creature, with aristocratic features and a highly educated voice. He had a most charming and almost diffident manner, and talked to me for nearly an hour about the various species of butterflies, thirty-one in all, to be found on the Rock, and he claimed to have caught twenty-eight of the species. He gave me the idea that he knew everything there is to be known about butterflies, and knowing nothing about them myself, I was delighted to have a lesson so unexpectedly from so charming a master. He was disconcertingly polite, rising to his feet when I spoke to him (he had been sitting on a stone bench), and addressing me with a polished courtesy that he would have certainly employed had we been introduced at tea-time in a London drawing-room. I wondered, but dared not ask, how he got on with his sergeant-major, and what it felt like suddenly to be pitchforked from school or university (he looked so young) into the army. I thought about my butterfly enthusiast all day, and I still wonder what he is doing—whether he drives heavy lorries or blasts rocky tunnels for a change; whether he dreams of becoming an officer, or whether, which is quite likely, he prefers to be a simple soldier reading the classics of an evening, while his noisier colleagues drink beer and sing ditties in bass voices.

One day I woke up to find that the African coast was hidden in white mist, and, craning my head out of the window, I noticed that a ring of cotton wool hung like a giant necklace round the Rock. It had been so humidly hot that I had been unable to sleep all night, but the queer thing about it was that from time to time, in spite of this torrid heat, there were little puffs of hot wind which, instead of cooling one, seemed to do just the opposite. I was having my first taste of the *levanter*, which some Spaniards call the suicide wind. It comes from the east, and upon hitting the Rock turns into a humid blanket, and there it remains for hours or days, and is

about the most unpleasant thing you can imagine. It is much worse for the people on the Rock than for us, but we get a sort of backwash, if I may put it that way, and however lightly one dresses one's things stick to the body, and are often quite wet by the time one takes them off. This had been hanging around for several days, when a Spaniard rang me up asking me to go with a small party he was making up to visit the fair at La Linea. I knew him to be a great enthusiast of the bullring, but, although I had not been much impressed by the fight I had seen in Madrid, bullfights assume such an importance in the south that it would have been churlish to refuse. We drove over early on a Sunday morning in time to attend mass at the church at La Linea, and the heat was terrific, the sun burning through the damp haze.

The people of Algeciras do not particularly like the inhabitants of La Linea, and are condescending about the newer city, which is poorer and without any architectural gems. The main street has a few second-rate shops, for nearly all the male population, and quite a lot of the women, work by day in Gibraltar, leaving early in the morning, and returning late at night. But during the fair the bullfights are amongst the best in Spain, and even the people of Algeciras are obliged to concede this point, however much it may hurt their pride. The slim, dark-moustached, good-looking Captain Gómez had invited, besides myself, the Doña Inocencia, who had taken me to visit Antonio's farm some time before.

We lunched at El Vincentino, over which Manuel Vedolla, a stout and jovial host behind a zinc bar, presides. It is known as the restaurant with only one table, because behind the bar is a small cubby-hole, where there is just enough room for four or five people to partake of Manuel's omelettes, which are superb, his stuffed olives, flavoured with garlic, and his veal and fried potatoes, the whole helped down with a bottle or two of Antonio de la Riva from Jerez. This limited accommodation has become the talk of the town, so that the single table must be ordered many days ahead, especially at fiesta time, when the place is crowded for the bullfight. The room was whitewashed, with only a poster

opposite the door to give a semblance of decoration. It was half-way along a narrow passage leading from the tavern to a courtyard, at the far end of which was the kitchen where a wizened Spanish woman was generally to be seen bending over her pans. The poster was a reproduction in photography of a famous picture by the artist born at La Linea, José Cruz Herrera, showing three matronly Spanish women with wide skirts, ample bodices, mantillas, Spanish combs, and fans. It was called 'Mujeres Lineases.' The central figure with the pearl necklace was the artist's wife, and the two others were his sisters. In the background and to the right, one could see the church and the square. The poster, an advertisement for the fiesta, was a charming piece of work, and led me to make inquiries about the artist. I was told that he lived in Casablanca, but would doubtless be here for the fair.

'Did you by any chance,' asked Inocencia, 'notice a man standing up against a pillar at mass this morning wearing an alpaca coat and a green shirt, and who continually fanned himself with his pocket handkerchief, which he delicately held between finger and thumb like a beau of the time of Louis XIV? That is his brother. I am sure that we shall come up against José Cruz Herrera later in the day. A number of his pictures, including this one, hang in the town hall, and we shall be able to show them to you later.'

'Yes, of course,' said Captain Gomez. 'Perhaps you remember that I pointed the mayor out to you as we were leaving church? He is a friend of mine, and he may take us round, but I warn you to be very careful of what conversation you make with him because he is a leading Falangist and therefore entirely pro-German. You may think it curious that a pro-German should be appointed mayor of a city that depends for its existence on the British in Gibraltar, and where the population is anti-Falangist, but this shows how the Nazi influence strikes right down to the shores of Algeciras Bay.'

We went round to the city hall after lunch. It is a low building situated in the middle of a perfectly lovely garden guarded at the entrance by an elderly attendant wearing the





MUJERES LINCENSES CANTO DEL PRIMER LIBRO POR JOSÉ CORTÍZ DE BARRA

# VELADA Y FIESTAS 1942

DEL 12 AL 19 DE JULIO

## LA LÍNEA DE LA CONCEPCIÓN

*A Poster for the Fair at La Linea*

*'... it led me to make inquiries about the artist'*



Falangist insignia of the five arrows on his uniform, and who was lolling on an old kitchen chair in the heat of the sun. He led us across the garden to the main door of the city hall, which was opened from within at our approach by a young man. It was cool once we had passed the threshold, and in the hall hung a picture which I guessed immediately to be by José Cruz Herrera. It showed a young woman reclining on a couch, while a man crouching beside her was holding up for her benefit a basket of luscious fruit. In the background was the mighty Rock of Gibraltar, against which the artist had painted a rainbow. We were shown into the mayor's office, which was beautifully furnished, and where the 'Mujeres Lineases' hung in perfect light, and which I thought even more lovely than I had guessed from the reproduction. The mayor's desk was a model of tidiness and comfort, with an incongruous American touch, for he had placed a notice beside him which read: 'Keep it short.' The inevitable photograph of General Franco hung in the place of honour, and opposite hung that of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, founder of the Falangist movement, who was killed during the civil war, and who would doubtless have been dictator of Spain had he lived. His name now haunts one wherever one goes. Outside every church is a cross to his memory, and his enemies say: 'One would think he was the only man to have been killed in the civil war.' But they say so in a hushed whisper, not to be overheard by the secret police.

On our return to the high street we came across a great crowd outside the Hotel Iberia, where the famous matador, Martial Lalanda, was stepping out of an antiquated taxi-cab filled with his luggage, his backers, and his attendants. Lalanda was making his farewell appearance in La Linea that evening, and his fans had gathered to welcome him. It was rumoured that he was receiving a purse of fifty thousand pesetas for killing two bulls in the ring, and in normal times he would have driven up the street in regal splendour in an expensive limousine, but petrol is short even for the matadors. Captain Gomez declared we must be thirsty, and invited us to drink something cool in a café where a white-haired, close-

cropped barman was chewing a wooden toothpick behind his zinc counter. Already the town was filling up, not only with picturesque crowds who had just disembarked from the ships arriving specially from Ceuta and Tangier, but a great stream of people was arriving from the frontier post at the end of the causeway leading from Gibraltar. The Gibraltarians came in their thousands, each having changed the legal ten-shilling note at the *cambio*, but it was rumoured that detectives in all sorts of disguises were going to search these visitors to see whether they had any Gibraltar currency upon their persons. It was obvious that ten shillings would hardly pay for a seat in the sun at the bullfight, without taking into account the drinks and supper, so that many people would obviously be tempted to patronize the black market, where a pound would fetch sixty pesetas. The Gibraltarians, because of these rumours, were in careful mood, being unwilling to spend a night in jail, but there is no law against borrowing money from a Spanish friend, and from time to time there arrived at the counter some individual who would exchange a sly wink with the barman, who thereupon delved into a large biscuit tin, in which were stacked a great quantity of small rolls of paper, each with a name upon it. These rolls contained bank notes to the amount that the Gibraltarians had agreed beforehand to 'borrow'—the equivalent in English money being placed at the disposal of the barman in Gibraltar, which funds he would doubtless use in due course to buy tobacco for smuggling across to Spain, where it could be resold at a great profit. We had watched this side-play with amusement, though in silence, for a few moments. I was about to say something when Inocencia cut us short and changed the subject abruptly by calling my attention to the effectiveness of a huge poster showing a bullfighter doing the butterfly turn, which decorated the wall beside us. She went into a long description about this supreme art of the matador, which surprised me, because I knew that her knowledge of bullfighting was only a trifle more expert than my own. A few moments later I became aware that a man who had been seated at an adjoining table was leaving the bar. When he had

passed into the street Inocencia said to me: 'That man was a German agent, and he was listening.'

'How on earth was I to know?'

'To begin with you should be suspicious of everybody, and in this case you might have noticed that he was hiding behind a copy of *Adler*, which nobody but a German or a pro-German reads.'

I felt the rebuff keenly, for Inocencia was annoyed. Doubtless she thought I might have made things awkward, not only for ourselves, but for Captain Gomez, whose superiors must necessarily be well inclined to the Nazis. Indeed Spanish officers now enter the presence of their chief of staff cap in hand, clicking their heels together Prussian fashion. Captain Gomez, leaning across the table, said to me with a reassuring smile:

'You will get into the continental habit. Things are never quite what they seem here. Do you see the man with the high forehead sitting by himself in the far corner? Until a few days ago he was a wealthy man, but his name was found on a list of freemasons, the penalty for which is twelve years and one day's imprisonment. The extra day is tantamount to a further twelve years' imprisonment without trial. The unfortunate man was faced with dying in jail or using his entire fortune to bribe the authorities. He chose to live, and I think most other men would have done the same thing, but very few former freemasons are rich enough to save themselves in this way.'

Captain Gomez looked at his watch. 'Come,' he said, 'politics are not for you, and if you've never been "back-stage" in a bullring, I think you would find it interesting. I happen to be known here, and I think they will show us round.'

I was thrilled at the idea, for the only knowledge I had of these things was from a coloured film I had seen once in London. I knew that there was a chapel where the matadors, dressed in all their finery, prayed just before going into the ring, but I am in general somewhat suspicious of the accuracy of Hollywood films, and I was glad to see the real thing.

There was no carriage to take us to the other end of the town, so we made our way through the crowds. There were a few shops, but they were very poor, and the food shortage was apparent. Some of the stalls in the market had only the hind legs of a rabbit for sale, others had a wing of chicken covered with flies. There was no meat, and very little fruit. Pumpkins were plentiful, but expensive, and men stood in the middle of the narrow market street selling tiny dried fish strung on threads between the prongs of a fork. A donkey stood placidly beside a dozen trusses of newly bound hay outside an inn, from the interior of which came the gay sounds of Spanish music from a pianola. The houses were dazzlingly white, and mostly of two stories, though there was a new block of flats overlooking the fair ground which looked pleasant. The fair stretched for about a quarter of a mile in front of the bullring, and there were thousands of electric globes strung from one line of booths to the other, under which one walked, and which would make a wonderful sight in the evening. The fair at La Linea is held at the same time every year. Twelve months ago a number of Italian aeroplanes, raiding Gibraltar, appeared right above the fair ground at two o'clock in the morning. The roundabouts were crowded at this hour, and people were merrily riding round and round on ostriches and pigs and horses and camels to the sound of the strident music. The fair attendants, hearing the sirens, ran for cover, forgetting to turn off the machinery of the roundabouts, so that the merry-makers were left dizzily turning round and round for nearly an hour.

The bullring was a great circular edifice, painted ochre and brick-red. Captain Gomez led us to two wide gates which were ajar, and where we were welcomed by a couple of attendants who knew him. We thus entered into a *patio* with a roof of vines, from which large bunches of ripening grapes hung from the thick leaves, and it was beautifully cool. In a corner was a pump beside the trunk of the vine, and a boy was drawing ice-cold water. We were led through a narrow aperture to a corral, where three tame bulls with bells round their necks looked up at our approach, and being told that

they would do us no harm we crossed over to peep through a crack in the heavy door at five wild bulls in a second corral. These bulls were for the fight of the following day. We retraced our steps to the Patio Matadero, which we had entered at first, and while Captain Gomez was talking to one of the ranchers from Los Barrios, where the wild bulls were bred, Inocencia and I remained under the cool vines. Suddenly the great double doors were thrown open, and somebody shouted 'The bulls!' I was just wondering what all this was about when Inocencia grabbed me by the arm and pushed me, with herself following on my heels, behind one of the heavy wooden boards against the wall, which the Spaniards call *burladeros*, from the Spanish verb *burlar*, 'to fool,' because, by hiding behind these barriers, one 'fools' the bulls, who are thus unable to attack one.

A moment later seven bulls careered into the *patio*, and dust flew in all directions.

'You can peep through the cracks,' said Inocencia, holding my arm. 'The wild bull is the fellow in the middle with the huge horns and the others are tame bulls to encircle him and drive him safely through.'

There was a tremendous scramble, and a lot of shouting and cursing, and a few moments later the heavy doors were closed again, and there was only a distant rumbling sound. We emerged rather dusty from our *burladeros*, and found Captain Gomez, whose face was radiant.

'Now,' said he, 'you two are going to see something really interesting. I am going to take you up to the *apartadero*, so that you may see this bull being put into his pen, where he will stay in the dark until the fight begins this evening.'

We climbed a flight of stairs, and found ourselves in what looked like the long attic of a barn. There were old oak rafters supporting the roof, and lots of pulleys and ropes, and saddles hung from the walls, but at various intervals there were square holes in the floor, each aperture being covered over with a trestle.

'Take care of your heads,' cried out Captain Gomez, 'and

don't catch your heels in the trestles. There are six apertures, and each of them is directly above a pen.'

'Only five bulls are in their pens,' explained the rancher from Los Barrios. 'We are about to put the sixth (the one you have just seen arrive) in his. Follow me.'

He led us into the centre of the 'attic,' where there was a much larger aperture, surrounded by a low wall. Below, as soon as our eyes were accustomed to the semi-obscurity, we could see an enormous beast with the most terrifying horns I have ever beheld. The impression was largely due to the fact that we were only just above the horns; so near, indeed, that by bending down we could have touched them if we had been less frightened. The bull was extremely angry, and from time to time bent his head and attacked a wall of the passage with his horns with such ferocity that we had the impression that the whole edifice was about to fall about us like a pack of cards. Those horns fascinated me, and Inocencia must have felt the same, because she whispered to me:

'Now you know what the matador is up against. Fancy staring into those horns. They seem much less dangerous from a safe seat high up in the bullring.'

An attendant took a long pole, called a *garrocha*, and started to prod the animal, but although the attendant prodded very hard, and sweat poured from his brow, the mighty beast only whisked his tail, as if he had been annoyed by a fly. What the bull was really angry about was finding himself confined in the passage, and what the attendant was trying to do was to persuade the animal to walk into his pen, where the door could be shut after him, and where he would be imprisoned until he was due to be killed in the ring.

On the whole the bull kept his temper better than the attendant, who soon began to curse and swear and smite the bull sideways with the pole, but it took at least ten minutes to coax him into the right pen. Then the trap was lowered by the pulley, and the bull was in his cell.

We were now invited to withdraw the trestle above the pen, and look down upon the bull in prison, but there was no protection above the aperture, and Inocencia and I were

wary. The bull was now very near to us, and if he felt that way inclined he could have reared his mighty horns upwards and probably caught us fair and square. But Captain Gomez was insistent that we should inspect each of the bulls in turn, though it was so dark down below that we only saw, in rapid succession, six gigantic pairs of horns above six extremely angry bulls.

From here we clambered down the stairs, and were conducted to the chapel, where within a couple of hours three matadors in glorious apparel would be kneeling, asking that they might return safely from the ring. They did return, but one of the picadors made his last appearance.

EVERY morning, just before midday, two ships much larger than the Gibraltar ferry, and painted white, glided into Algeciras harbour; one from Ceuta and the other from Tangier. I used to watch them go out again Africa-bound, after lunch, and my thoughts often went with them to the opposite continent. So many rumours came from the other side! Some people said that Tangier was terribly expensive; others that living was cheap; some said that one was shadowed by the Gestapo, who were capable of kidnapping one at the slightest provocation. A few Gibraltarians, whose families lived in Tangier, used to go across now and again, but the British military authorities had cancelled all leave for the services earlier in the year. The graceful white packet-boats were, therefore, not very full—indeed, they sometimes went off with only a dozen passengers, and there was continual talk about suspending the line without notice because of a lack of fuel oil. The shortest journeys in this part of the world were now becoming fantastically complicated. Each was an adventure in itself. The Spaniards did not want any pesetas to be taken out of the country, and the customs at Tangier did their best to prevent any money coming in. The Moroccan franc and the Spanish peseta were having a little war of their own, and sterling had no value except in the form of money orders through the British post office near the Place de France. One needed to be a most insistent person to overcome all these difficulties, but I had got it into my head to sail in one of these big white ships before the fuel oil ran out, and towards the end of the summer I obtained the necessary papers. I decided not to waste a moment in leaving, but I was not particularly anxious to make the journey alone, and two young Englishmen of civilian status, passing through Gibraltar, and hearing that I was ready to go, offered to take me with them. Geoffrey, the elder, was small and dark, spectacled and thoughtful. He was one of those who



turn over their words with care, smoke a pipe after breakfast, and have the slightly socialistic tendency of our university intelligentsia. Ivor was very tall and athletic, and unable to understand why he was taken immediately for an Englishman in foreign parts. He had a good hearty laugh, that illuminated his good-looking face, and his skin was burned to a dark brown to the waist through sun bathing. They came over from Gibraltar to join me, and we lunched at the Cristina before driving down to the ship that sailed at 3 p.m. A damp white mist had blanketed the Rock all the morning, and even hung lightly over our own fair city, making the lightest clothes feel wet. The sea beckoned us with the promise of a cool breeze, for the further we sailed away from Algeciras Bay the clearer the air would become.

The *Ciudad de Algeciras* looked resplendent in a new coat of white paint, and very gay with the bunting with which it was decorated to commemorate the outbreak of the disastrous civil war. The Spanish flag floated from its stern, and the sides of the ship were painted with the national colours to warn submarines of its neutrality. The officers were smart in their white uniforms and gold shoulder-straps, but we were fewer than a dozen passengers in the first class, the forward accommodation being given over to a flock of sheep being shipped to Tangier from Los Barrios, after a long journey from the north, where for some reason they had not been able to cross the Pyrenees, for consumption by the Germans, who seldom left any live-stock for anybody else.

We left the harbour less than a quarter of an hour later, and turning right in the bay hugged the land past Punta Carnero, which is one tip of the horseshoe (the other being Europa Point, on the Rock), and continued near the shore as far as Tarifa and the lighthouse on Punta Marroqui, after which we turned sharply south in order to cross the straits. There was now a warm dry breeze, and because of the cloudless sky the sea had turned from green to sapphire. A big flying fish darted out of the water, skimmed the azure for a moment, and plunged out of sight. In the distance a school of porpoises rose and dipped with that switchback movement

that makes them visible far away. There was not another ship to be seen. Two portly Egyptians were talking loudly at a table on the veranda deck in front of a jug of beer and sandwiches, and their curious French was a reminder that I should soon be hearing that language frequently for the first time during my journey. A stolid English bank manager, wearing, in spite of the heat, a new overcoat he had bought in Gibraltar, sipped a glass of brandy, commenting with some bitterness on the amount of liquor consumed on the Rock, which he had not visited for ten years. The engines throbbed melodiously, and we seemed to be cleaving the water at great speed. Ivor, who had missed the flying fish, disappeared in the stern, hoping to see another, but there was enough wind to blow one's hair into knots, and after a brief sortie I returned to the veranda. Gibraltar, which on a really clear day may be seen from Tangier, had already disappeared in the mist, but occasionally an aeroplane would pass over us on patrol, and now the North African coast, greener than Spain, took shape. Soon after 5 p.m. we came in sight of Malabata, the mountain at the tip of Tangier Bay, and soon we were steaming towards the beautiful city with its white houses, great modern buildings, and sandy shores. In the distance, towards Spartel, at the far end of the bay, a convoy was coming in from the ocean, bound for Gibraltar, having run the gauntlet of submarine-infested waters. The Gestapo at the Rif, the ultra-modern Swiss hotel on the sea-front at Tangier, where the Germans have their headquarters, would doubtless be taking note of all passing ships through glasses.

We tied up at the jetty towards six o'clock, to find the quayside crowded with Spanish customs officials and Arabs wearing the burnous and the fez. Our baggage was searched for contraband, and our persons for currency, the men being examined separately in a small room, the women passing through another, where a young Spanish girl, rather pretty, very trim, but with hard set lips, made a searching examination, as if she had been holding up prisoners during the civil war. We came out of this ordeal to find ourselves

amongst the sheep already disembarked on the quay, many of which had died during the journey.

We had been assailed on arrival by a host of Arab guides, and we had finally capitulated to a good-looking young fellow with suave manners called 'Good Time Charley.' He took our luggage, told us he would square the customs if we had any cigarettes (which he didn't), and found us a taxi. Tangier had only two or three taxis. To drive in a vehicle through the city was, therefore, such an occasion that the taxi-drivers decided that the fare shown on the metre in francs should be paid in pesetas because pesetas are six times more valuable. This little trick caught every greenhorn on his first trip over, and we proved no exception, because when we reached El Minzah, and handed over thirty francs, being the fare on the metre, we learned that if we had no pesetas (which was the case) the journey would cost us 180 francs.

None of us, I think, had any intention of saving pence during our stay in Tangier, but I for one on hearing that a taxi-driver wanted 180 francs for driving us a six-minute journey felt somewhat hurt, for, until the collapse of France, 180 francs were worth exactly a pound. Since then currencies had become a riotous nightmare, and this we discovered when going to the British post office to change our postal orders. We were given 470 Moroccan francs to the pound and we left the building with a wad of fcs. 14,000 in fifty-franc notes.

With these notes, if we wished to, we could purchase pesetas in the town at the rate of seventy-eight to the pound, whereas the official rate in Spain was forty-two, and even the black market of the mainland was unwilling just then to bid above fifty-five. Armed with bulky packages of very worn bank-notes we returned to the hotel to book our rooms. 'Good Time Charley' was waiting for us, but while our companion, Geoffrey, was signing the register, the manager came up to him and said: 'You are wanted on the telephone, sir.' Geoffrey is not the sort of man to answer without mature consideration. He puffed at his pipe a good minute and answered: 'I think you must be mistaken, for I have no friends in this city, and even if I had, I have not yet signed

the register, so I do not for the life of me see how you can know my name.' Geoffrey was very proud of this answer, knowing that I, for instance, would just have rushed to the telephone with the impetuosity of an empty head, but the manager kept on nudging Geoffrey's arm, and saying: 'Believe me, sir, somebody really does want to speak to you on the telephone.' This comedy lasted for some time, until the manager virtually pushed Geoffrey into the telephone booth and disappeared into his private office, where he took up the receiver and telephoned to Geoffrey in the booth, saying: 'It is I who wish to telephone to you, sir. "Good Time Charley" is a Nazi agent.' Geoffrey, thus precipitated, if I may say so, into the first pages of a thriller, bit the mouth-piece of his pipe, and exclaimed: 'Ah.'

We dismissed 'Good Time Charley.' Perhaps the whole thing was a trick arranged for the benefit of the official hotel guide, but personally I did not like Charley.

We were charged 110 francs each for three splendid rooms, and this worked out at only a fraction more than five shillings. They had large windows overlooking a cool *patio*, where people were drinking sherry under umbrella tables. It must have been about seven o'clock, and I suggested to my companions that we might learn the geography of the town before nightfall. We therefore left the hotel, turned right past the Italian bar (Geoffrey was most insistent that we must give it a very wide berth), and the policeman standing under his parasol in the middle of the road; and found ourselves in the Grand Soko, the wonderful Arab market-place, which is a riot of colour, and where the snake charmer and the professional story-teller ply their trades next to each other. We crossed the square, having idled a good half hour amongst the squatting natives and their wares, and entered a narrow street full of Arab stalls. It was at this moment that something happened that was to influence the whole of our stay in Tangier. A thin man, wearing a fez and a rather dirty jellaba, sidled up to me and said in French: 'This is the rue de l'Italie.' Now this was precisely the information that I was seeking. I looked at my benevolent informant, and imme-

diately fell in love with him. He had the most gentle eyes, close-cropped black moustaches, olive features, and an ingratiating smile that would have melted anybody but Geoffrey, whose adventure in the telephone booth had warned him against the whole race of Arab guides. Geoffrey was as a man thwarted in his first love. He hated all guides on principle, seeing in them agents of the Gestapo. It was not for me to go against the wishes of my two strong companions, so reluctantly I thanked Sidi for his information, and passed on, but Sidi followed respectfully like a whipped dog, and his big dark eyes were, I thought, filled with disappointed tears. It was I who nicknamed him Sidi. I felt that he was worthy of the title accorded to a marabout, which is equivalent to monseigneur. After a few moments Sidi sidled up again, and said to me: 'There is a very good French newspaper shop here. Maybe you would like a newspaper, or a book, or a magazine.'

How did Sidi know that this was just what I wanted? I pretended not to hear, but the cunning fellow led me to the door, and as soon as we had gone in, he waited patiently and discreetly outside. I was amazed to discover that the French papers seemed to be reaching Tangier much faster than Lisbon or Madrid. I found the current number of *Marie-Claire* and all the back numbers, which, by the time I had paid for them at the desk, were already, in some mysterious way, under Sidi's jellaba. Even Geoffrey was mildly interested, though he pretended not to be, and refused to buy so much as an evening paper or a sixpenny novel, but he pointed to a notice above the owner's desk which read:

'Je n'ai aucune crainte pour les Français. Ils se sont élevés à une telle hauteur dans l'histoire du monde que leur esprit ne peut plus être asservi en aucune façon.'—GOETHE.

We went out into the street again, and Ivor said: 'I want to buy a pair of slippers. 'Certainly,' said Sidi. 'Follow me.' I could see Geoffrey's pipe trembling, but I knew he was beaten. We were now two against one.

We descended in the wake of Sidi, through the narrow tortuous streets of Arab quarters, past picturesque stalls and

overhanging houses with gorgeous porticos. We smelt the smells of North Africa—charcoal and herbs—and admired the absolute cleanliness about us. We saw the bakers baking bread in ovens heated by fir cones, and tasted Arab cakes of honey, and we watched the craftsmen ply their various trades in their tiny shops, seated cross-legged on cushions. We saw the tailors sewing jellabas while little children, their heads shaven, held and turned the threads; and we stopped at a shoemaker's, where Sidi held up for Ivor's admiration a pair of hand-made leather slippers. 'Six hundred and fifty francs,' announced Sidi. 'An absolute theft,' exclaimed Geoffrey. Ivor took the slippers and wavered. They were just what he wanted, but he was apt to be influenced by Geoffrey. I beat down the merchant (by way of Sidi) to five hundred francs, and the slippers disappeared, together with the books and magazines, under Sidi's jellaba. Proud of his success Sidi led us through a maze of narrow streets, past the Jewish quarter, back into the Arab quarter, where he stopped to peer, as if by accident, into a recess where the Arab craftsmen were sewing more slippers. 'They are just finishing a pair of women's slippers,' he remarked to me with a sly look. 'You see they are more supple, and have soft white leather tops. I expect this is size thirty-five.' He gurgled something in Arab, and the shoes were handed up to me. They were indeed very lovely. The trouble with Sidi was that he knew I had expensive tastes, and always tempted me with the very best. 'Of course as they are smaller than men's slippers they cost much less,' he went on. 'This pair is 450 francs.' I thought I must try to beat him down, but the artful fellow cut in: 'The shoemaker says that he won't accept a franc less than 400. Give him half the money, and we will come back and fetch them when they are finished to-morrow evening.' Sidi was now giving me orders, and the terrible thing was that I meekly paid the deposit and went away after him delighted with the shoes.

We now found ourselves climbing up to the Casaba, which is the citadel or fort, with the old mint, the treasury house, the Bashaw's palace, the hall of justice, the prison, and a



*'We descended in the wake of Sidi, through the narrow tortuous streets*





mosque, but most lovely are the gardens with ripening bananas and tangerines, and walls covered with bougainvillaea. Roses and carnations grew riotously, and the place smelt of lavender.

Sidi played his part in a most dignified way. He was never the guide, but was always there to answer any query one might put to him. It seemed that when one was not asking him a question he disappeared into the atmosphere, always assuming shape again at a clap of the hands. 'Sidi, where was the Sultan's harem?' Here was Sidi back again, gliding in front of us, while the tassel of his fez bobbed up and down, and here was the harem, which Sidi seemed to present to us with a sweep of his arm, as if to say: 'It's all yours.' 'It must have been rather damp in there, Sidi.' Sidi gave me a knowing smile. A woman came hurrying along the path exclaiming: 'Good evening; be welcome. I heard you speak French, and I simply had to come out.' After she had gone Sidi said she had been put there during the French administration, and had just gone on living in this unreal fairyland as its guardian, but that she was homesick for French voices, for there are no more tourists.

Sidi took us up some stairs to the roof of the palace, where a dozen Arabs in the most beautiful garments were resting after the day's work, smoking in front of hot drinks. We ordered Turkish coffee, and the aged proprietor of this roof-garden café took us to see the view down over the city and across the bay. Below were the Arab and Jewish quarters, higher up in the centre of the town stood El Minzeh, in its lovely gardens, and the Place de France, and the Boulevard Pasteur, with its beautiful shops and big dressmaking houses, stretching away as far as the French post office. Down by the sea was the Avenue d'Espagne with its magnificent palm-trees (Tangier's Promenade des Anglais), at the far end of which the Rif Hotel has a commanding view over the golden sands. And we could see all the bay sweeping from the mountain on our left to Malabata on our right. The proprietor in his turban, which his hairdresser wound for him every morning, as he told us, and his saraul, those curious

baggy trousers, grew herbs on the roof. He tended with special care his verbenas, which, being infused, provides a soothing drink, and his mint, which is placed in each glass of green tea. Nearly all his guests spoke French—some of them very fluently—and returning to where our coffee was waiting for us, we started a discussion on rations of sugar, butter, and oil, just as half a dozen housewives might have done over a cup of tea in London. Sidi had retired discreetly into a corner where he was drinking coffee himself. His sense of ownership of us was increasing, and when Geoffrey said that at any rate we would not need him after dinner, Sidi smiled and announced that we would find him when we came out, and that he was quite prepared to go without any sleep that night. Ivor winked at me, because like myself, he was beginning to appreciate Sidi, against whom Geoffrey was no match.

In spite of Sidi's enthusiasm we went to bed soon after midnight, for we were anxious to be up at an early hour the following morning. He was waiting for me after breakfast, and descending the rue des Statutes, where the bespectacled policeman was already on duty under his blue-and-white umbrella, we crossed the Grand Soko, where the Sunday morning market was in full swing under the eucalyptus-trees (eggs, tomatoes, pimento, lavender, and roses), and wandered down the Calle de los Siaghin in the direction of the Petit Soko. This narrow street is one of the busiest in Tangier. The shops and stalls were already open, and so were the money changers, amongst the last to ply their trade in the war, for they were still able to deal in sterling, in dollars, in Moroccan francs, and in Spanish pesetas. Flags were flying from the stalls—the red standard of the Sultan of Morocco, with the interwoven triangles and the green flag of the Caliph. It is a street teeming with people of many races and creeds. There is the rue de la Synagogue, and the church of the Spanish Catholic Mission, with its palm-trees and bougainvilleas. The humblest stalls are huddled beside the most magnificent shops, and here the Galeries Lafayette, with their tempting window displays. Prices were sometimes in francs and sometimes in

pesetas. There were charming little white dresses with white lace collars for fcs. 1,900, and some of the nicest handbags I had seen since leaving London at anything between 257 and 360 pesetas. There is also the Grand Paris, where one still finds a number of pre-war goods, such as powder puffs of swan's-down, laces, and silks, and excellent silk stockings at ninety francs a pair, which works out at little more than four shillings. The Petit Soko is a busy though diminutive square, where the terraces of the cafés almost meet in the centre—the Gran Café Central, the Royal Bar, the Hotel-Restaurant Fuentes, and the Café España. I did a little shopping in the Calle de los Siaghin, but Sidi instinctively led me once again to the Arab quarter, where I followed him obediently, finding myself before long in a street where Arab merchants stood behind sacks filled with herbs. I am quite sure that Sidi had made up his mind that he could twist me round his little finger. He stopped (he had been walking about ten yards ahead), and when I came level with him, pointed to a sack filled with green leaves. 'Henna,' he explained. 'You shall buy a kilo and I will take it to my wife, who will dry it in the sun and pound it for you into powder, so that it will be ready for you before dinner this evening.'

'But, Sidi, do you think I really need henna?'

Sidi looked pained. He had a habit of answering questions at a slant.

'Look at that woman's hands,' he said, as an Arab passed us. 'They are all dabbed with henna dye. She is a lady's-maid, and she has been tending her mistress.'

He plunged a hand into the sack, allowing the dried leaves to slip through his fingers, arguing the while with the merchant. Then turning to me he asked: 'Will a kilo be sufficient? You shall also buy some of these dried rose-buds, with which you can make sachets. This merchant is less of a thief than most of his colleagues. You can trust me to see that the price is right.'

As soon as we had completed the deal Sidi led me off to his home in the Arab quarter, where he was to hand the henna over to his wife. He left me twenty yards or so from the

entrance to his house, and I watched the door being opened to him by a woman to whom he gave lordly instructions. Then he came back, and set off at a brisk pace along the Calle Dar Baroud, where I was intrigued by a high-pitched wailing. The shrill noise rose and fell until, through an open door, we saw some thirty little children sitting in a semicircle round their master as they intoned the Koran.

The room was very bare with white walls, a frieze of mosaic, and a low ceiling. Most of the children were three or four years old, but a few were even younger, and there were both girls and boys. At the side of the open door were two pairs of diminutive clogs, with red straps, and they looked hardly larger than if they had been taken off a couple of dolls. The master had beautiful brown eyes, with a humorous twinkle in them, a sharp nose, and a grey beard. He was sitting on a cushion against the far wall, under a rosary, and with his back to a blackboard. He wore a tarbuc of brown-and-white wool on his head, a white caftan with a red-and-black sash, and white woollen socks without any shoes. He held a long reed in his right hand, with which he alternately beat the cadence, and pointed at some child who was not doing or singing the right thing. On a carpet at his right were pens and ink. He looked at me as I peered into the room, and his eyes seemed to sparkle with the joy of living, but the wand went on beating until he caught sight of a crowd of street children behind my back who were peering not so much at him as at me, and then he gesticulated with the stick as if shooing them away.

I felt a little responsible for this untimely interruption of the morning's lesson, and I told Sidi to apologize on my behalf, saying that I was so charmed with the sight that I craved his indulgence while I went on looking for a few moments. The master held up the class and bowed, answering, through Sidi, that although he could speak no English, his brother had emigrated to the United States as a young man, and had lived there until his death a few years ago. I asked him to whom the diminutive shoes belonged, and he pointed with his wand to a little girl in a violet frock who, he

said, was only two years old, and to her companion with large grey eyes, sitting beside her. Each of the children held up a piece of paper, on which were written letters of the alphabet. Sidi told me that it would be nice if I made the master a small present, because things had become very difficult for the school since the war, so I sent Sidi as ambassador with a hundred-franc note, while I smiled in the doorway.

I had arranged to meet Geoffrey at eleven o'clock, for he was not an early riser, and seeing that I had half an hour to spare, I asked Sidi to take me to the Avenue d'Espagne. My plan was to make a clandestine visit to the Rif Hotel, for I knew that as soon as my companions came down from their slumbers they would prevent me from going there, not wishing to be seen in an hotel which was allegedly the Nazi headquarters. Personally I had no such fears, though my plan was only to wander through the public rooms to see what the place looked like inside. The sun was very hot in the Avenue d'Espagne, but the queerest thing was the absolute lack of any transport except by donkey. I suddenly realized I had not seen a car all the morning, and it seemed to me that this was about the only good thing which the war had brought to us.

Nevertheless, outside the Rif there were three cars. The inference was obvious. The hotel is a mighty modern structure of shining ochre. It is the typical Swiss palace, and the entrance hall is very vast and very lofty, with a large shaven-headed porter in a resplendent uniform standing at a shiny desk at the foot of a monumental staircase. It was all extremely Hollywood, and I felt a diminutive figure as I crossed the threshold, and timidly asked my way to the bar. The porter lifted a fat hand, and shooed a page-boy into my arms. The page-boy took a quick look at me, and bolted up the stairs. I followed him with less precipitation. On the first floor there was a huge room with wooden panelling and pillars, and a vast expanse of windows overlooking the bay. It was very Swiss in its airiness and cleanliness, and it might have been in Lucerne or Ouchy—anywhere but in Morocco.

The bar was between this room and the dining-hall, which formed a corner of the building and had even more sheets of glass than the other. The page-boy pointed to the bar and disappeared. The barman looked up from cleaning a glass, but there was not a single client. I felt I had done what I had set out to do, and explaining that I was looking for a friend who had obviously not yet arrived, wandered into the dining-room, where 'these gentlemen,' as the French call their temporary masters, obviously took their meals. The view of the city from the corner windows was as beautiful as that over the bay from the front. But in the foreground I recognized the nearby Hotel Bristol, over which floats the most enormous Union Jack. It seemed to dominate the whole town. I retraced my steps, and on the stairs was passed by a plump woman with flaxen hair wearing a shantung suit, who came hurrying up leaving a trail of Chanel No. 5 in her wake. This frau was the only German I was to come across, but in the hall I said a modest 'thank you' to the fat hotel porter, who beamed contentedly, and by way of answer threw up his right hand in the Nazi salute.

Sidi was waiting under the palm-trees. He seemed glad to see me, and skirting the corner of the hotel (Centre Allemand de Kultur) we climbed past the Bristol to the French post office. From this magnificent building to the Place de France could be found, until the French collapse, the highest example of French culture which needed no *kultur* bureau to advertise it. It had become rather sad. Of the several thousand in the French colony all but a handful had left the city. The Boulevard Pasteur retained the splendour of a spinster of noble family who had lost her fortune, and was deserted by her former friends. The tricolour still flew from the offices of the *Dépêche Marocaine*, and there were a few dressmaking houses, displaying rolls of lovely silk prints at fcs. 258 the metre, and some pretty leather belts of obvious pre-war make. There was a French chemist's shop, where I found some Nogent nail files, some Houbigant soap, some swan's-down powder-puffs, and a whole lot of other things that one no longer finds anywhere. But the glory of the Boulevard Pasteur had gone,

and when later Ivor and I sat down on the very smart terrace of the Grand Café de Paris, opposite the French consulate, a magnificent building flying the French flag, in gardens filled with hibiscus and bougainvillea, the whole thing struck me as a terrible mockery.

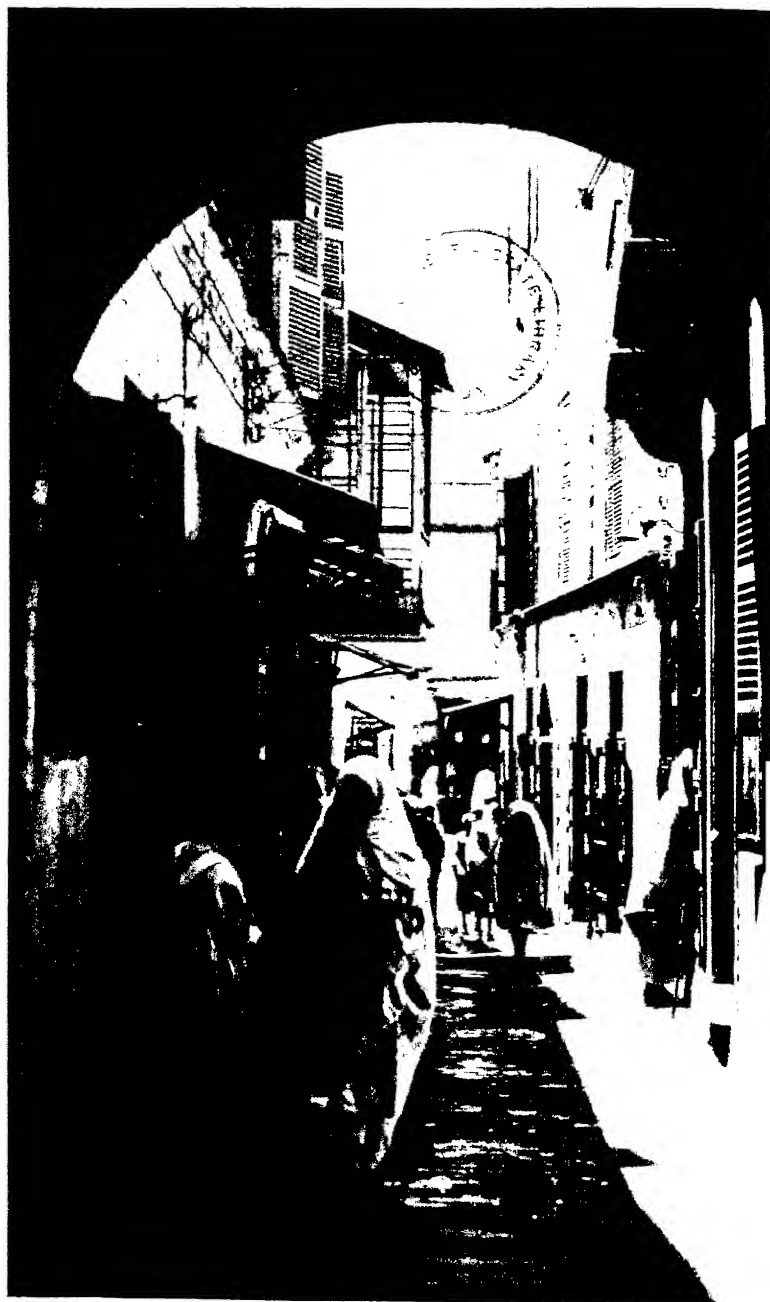
But Sidi, the serpent, sidled up, and suggested that we should spend the afternoon riding up the mountain on donkeys. Ivor and I jumped at the idea, but Geoffrey pretended he must call at the British consulate, and we accordingly gave him permission to absent himself. I am sorry because I would have liked to see Geoffrey, pipe in mouth, on a donkey. At any rate, after lunch, Ivor and I, on leaving our hotel, suddenly saw Sidi riding at the head of a caravan. He dismounted at our approach, and helped me on to the back of Hamoudah, the smallest of the three animals—a grey beast with the most tender eyes and fluffy ears. I mounted side-saddle, but the donkey driver looked perturbed, and asked if I was sure I wouldn't fall off. He said that in the Arab world the men mounted side-saddle and the women astride, but that everybody mounted astride until they were sure of not falling off side-saddle. I answered that I was prepared to take the risk, because Hamoudah did not seem high enough off the ground to make falling off very dangerous, and so the donkey driver turned his attention to Ivor. Meanwhile Hamoudah ambled off past the animal park (where the Arabs leave their donkeys and an occasional camel as Europeans used to leave their motor cars in the days when they had them), and trotted off at quite a smart pace down a country road. I looked back and saw that the rest of the caravan had not yet started, so it struck me that if Hamoudah kept up this pace we would probably be far away before my companions got going, and we might lose ourselves. I tugged the piece of string that was Hamoudah's rein, and he stopped, but he had parked himself right in the middle of the road, and, what was worse, in the sun. To add to these misfortunes other donkeys, trying to pass us, found us in the way. I decided to steer Hamoudah under the shade of the trees, but Hamoudah thought I wanted to hurry on my way, and started cantering

off. I jerked the string and he stopped, and I now decided to turn him round, but this was too much for the noble beast, who had shown so much zeal in getting under way. We stayed placidly in the centre of the road—I, afraid to show to other donkey riders how inexperienced I was, and unable even to make a donkey turn round! Happily the rest of the caravan now came into sight. Sidi looked truly magnificent, for he had put up his hood to prevent his hard old skin from being touched by the sun, whereas six-foot-tall Ivor, in an open-necked shirt, and no hat, of course, bobbed up and down on the straw saddle, his huge face wreathed in one tremendous smile. And he thought he didn't look English! But I must say he was a splendid advertisement for our race. I think it was the most perfect day in his life.

It is extraordinary how rapidly one covers ground when riding on a donkey. We were soon climbing up the mountain, on a road bordered with huge eucalyptus and mimosa trees and prickly cactuses. The donkey driver ran behind urging on the three animals with numerous cries of 'Arre!' which soon became as monotonous to my ears as those cries of 'Agua . . . agua' through the long night-train journey in Spain. The donkey driver had a nasty habit of accompanying his 'Arre' (pronounced like our English 'Hurry!') and meaning much the same thing) with smart blows with his stick against the hind quarters of my donkey, causing Hamoudah to make a sudden spurt which, when I was not expecting it, caused me very nearly to lose my balance. I therefore smiled sweetly upon the donkey driver, and made signs that he should lend me his stick for my personal use, and when he had abandoned his weapon to me, I was able to continue to admire the country-side at leisure. From time to time Arab families passed us dragging goods along on old soap boxes fitted with roller-skate wheels. I asked Sidi about this, and he explained that now there were no more motor cars donkeys had become so expensive that the poorer Arabs were unable to buy them, and turning to the donkey driver he elucidated the fact that a donkey which cost less than a thousand francs before the war, now cost anything between







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seven and eight thousand. The poorest of the Arabs carried faggots to town on their backs. Many women passed us with extremely heavy loads, under which their backs were bent double, and because there was no more coal to be obtained such a load would fetch up to 170 francs in town. While tanks hurtle towards each other in Egypt, Morocco has gone back to biblical days. My Sidi was always giving me flowers, knowing probably that this was a short cut to my heart. He would jump off his donkey from time to time to gather large bunches of mimosa (both the European and the African kind), and I, having taken several sprays with which to decorate the ears of Hamoudah, would pass the mimosa back to the donkey driver to carry for me. Towards five o'clock we reached a tea-house on the top of the mountain. We dismounted, and tied up our donkeys to a post by the Arab side of the café, and ourselves went across to the European side, which had an arbour under thick fig-trees, where two portly Frenchwomen were talking. These women were the owners of the Café Sidi Amar, and they served us with excellent green tea, with mint, and when I asked for cakes, the older one answered: 'We have not got any, but if you will be patient for a quarter of an hour I will go into the kitchen and make some for you.'

Sidi sat down under a fig-tree at the other corner of the arbour, and smoked a cigarette which he had calmly taken from Ivor's case, which he had seen lying on the table, for Sidi considered that everything that belonged to us belonged to him. When the cakes arrived, having thanked the owner, I asked her half seriously: 'When will the war be over?' She answered: 'They say it will be over this year.' 'Who are they?' I queried. 'The Germans,' she answered. That was the nearest one could draw the French to politics.

We came down a steep mountain path, and for the first time I felt rather frightened on a donkey, although the donkey driver, having told me to hold the back of the saddle with one hand, grabbed Hamoudah's tail. We passed beautiful villas, which Sidi explained were changing hands at fantastic prices because the wealthy people of Tangier had

no faith in either the franc or the peseta, and he added: 'They have thousands of francs, but they know that they are valueless,' and he made a magnificent gesture from the top of his donkey, as if he were throwing imaginary francs into the ditch. When we came to more level ground (to my great relief) we encountered scores of Arabs returning home on their donkeys, and amongst these Sidi appeared to have numerous relations with whom he passed gay remarks. Sidi was now very proud. He wanted to show us off, as if he had acquired something valuable, which would put him for many days or perhaps weeks head and shoulders above other guides who had no strangers in their grasp.

We dismounted from our animals, and paid off the donkey driver at the Grand Soko, and Sidi made a great show of being angry with the donkey driver for asking too much, but we paid him all he asked, and Sidi came up to us confidentially afterwards, saying: 'You have made the donkey driver very happy.' But we also were well content with our afternoon.

We sent back to the hotel for Geoffrey, but he was not yet there. It appeared that he had slept all the afternoon in his room, and had only left for his appointment at six o'clock, and not knowing whether he would be free for dinner we decided to go off with Sidi in search of one, after which we could send him back to the hotel to wait for Geoffrey, and bring him to us. Sidi surpassed himself that evening, leading us to a small restaurant owned by an old Turk and his son, who had previously been in the drapery business at Oran, and in due course Sidi arrived with Geoffrey, who was in time to share our steak and fried potatoes and our crêpes Suzette.

Sidi came along after coffee, saying that he had himself dined excellently, and he brought me a bunch of magnificent roses, which he had acquired I know not where. We had planned towards dark to sup at the Ensallah, an open-air night club at the top of the town, which is frequented by the British colony. On the way one passes the Italian Roma Parque, which is the Axis equivalent, also in the open-air, and where the Italian colony runs the band. We were not

supposed to go in here, though, braver than the rest, I looked in for a few moments, but Geoffrey especially felt safer under the pepper-trees at the Ensallah until he discovered that the professional dancer who had caught his eye was a German who had only just arrived from Berlin, and was unable to speak either French or Spanish!

We bade farewell to Sidi by moonlight, after one o'clock in the morning. He looked very sad, but called down the blessings of heaven on my head, saying that he had been starving for a month, and that we had given him enough money to allow him to live in comfort for several weeks to come. He whispered to Ivor that perhaps when he next came he could bring him an old suit of European clothes. It appeared that to dress like a European was his dream. I shall forbid Ivor to do anything of the kind.



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